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AN

ANALYSIS OF RELIGIOUS BELIEF

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AN ANALYSIS

OF

RELIGIOUS BELIEF

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BY

VISCOUNT AMBERLEY

"Ye shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you Free."

VOL. II.

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AN

ANALYSIS OF RELIGIOUS BELIEF.

CHAPTER I.

HOLY BOOKS, OR BIBLES.

VAST, and even immeasurable, as the influence has been, which has been exercised on the course of human development by the great men of whom we have spoken, it has been equalled, if not surpassed, by the influence of the peculiar class of writings which we have grouped together under the designation of Holy Books. Of this, the last manifestation of the Religious Idea, it will be necessary to speak in considerable detail; both on account of its intrinsic importance, and because it is a branch of the subject which has not hitherto received the attention it deserves.

We have been far too much accustomed in Europe to treat the Bible as a book standing altogether by itself; to be admired, reverenced and loved, or, it may be, to be criticised, objected to and rejected, not as one of a class, but as something altogether peculiar and unparalleled in the literary history of the world.

And, undoubtedly, if we compare it with ordinary literature of whatever description, whatever age, and whatever nation, this opinion is just. Neither in the poetry, the history, or the philosophy of any other nation do we find any work that at all resembles it. Nevertheless it would be a very rash conclusion to arrive at, that because in the whole field of Greek or Roman, Italian or French, Teutonic or Celtic literature, there is nothing that admits of being put in the same category with the Bible, therefore the Bible cannot be placed in any category at all. It is one of a numerous class; a class marked by certain distinct characteristics; a class of which some specimen is held in honour from the furthest East of Asia, to the extreme West of America, or, in other words, throughout every portion of the surface of the earth which is inhabited by any race with the smallest pretence to civilisation and to culture. Wherever there is literature at all, there are Sacred Books. If in some isolated cases it is not so, these cases are exceptions too trifling in extent to invalidate the rule. Speaking generally we may say, that every people which has risen above the conditions of savage life; every nation which possesses an organised administration, a settled domestic life, a religion with developed and complex dogmas, possesses also its Sacred Books. If this truth has been too generally forgotten; if the Bible has been too commonly treated as something exceptional and peculiar which it was the glory of Christianity to possess, this omission is probably in great part due to the fact that the attention of scholars has been too much confined to the literature, the religion, and the general culture of the Greeks and Romans. From

special circumstances these nations had no Sacred writings among them. Their religion was independent of any such authorities; and our notions of pagan religion have been largely drawn from the religions of Greece and of Rome. But the Greeks and Romans were only an insignificant fraction of the Aryan race; and other far more numerous branches of that race had their recognised and authoritative Scriptures, containing in some portions those most ancient traditions of the original stock which entered into the intellectual property of the Hellenic family, in the form of mythological tales and current stories of their gods. We must not therefore be led by the example of classical antiquity to ignore the existence of these writings, or to overlook their importance.[1]

We may classify the Sacred Books to which reference will be made in this chapter as follows, proceeding (as in the case of prophets) from East to West:—

1. The Thirteen King, or Canon of the Confucians.
2. The Taò-tè-king, or Canon of the Taò-sè.
3. The Veda, or Canon of the Hindus.
4. The Tripitaka, or Canon of the Buddhists.
5. The Zend Avesta, or Canon of the Parsees.
6. The Koran, or Canon of the Moslems.
7. The Old Testament, or Canon of the Jews.
8. The New Testament, or Canon of the Christians.

The works included in the above list,—which are more numerous than might at first appear, owing to the vast collections comprised under the titles

[1] See on this subject the truly admirable remarks of Karl Otfried Müller, in his Prolegomena zu einer Wissenschaftlichen Mythologie (Göttingen, 1825), pp. 282–284.

"Vedas," and "Tripitaka,"—are distinguished, as has been already stated, by certain common characteristics. It would be an exaggeration to say that all of these characteristics apply to each one of the writings accepted by any portion of mankind as canonical. This cannot be so, any more than the peculiar qualities which may happen to distinguish any given race of men can ever belong in equal measure to all its members. Hence there will necessarily be some exceptions to our rules, but on the whole I believe we may say with confidence that canonical or sacred books have the following distinctive marks:—

A. There are certain external marks, the presence of which is essential to constitute them sacred at all.

1. They must be accepted by the sectaries of the religion to which they belong as being either inspired, or, if the nature of the faith precludes this idea, as containing the highest wisdom to which it is possible for man to attain, and indeed a much higher wisdom than can be reached by ordinary men. Nor do those who accept these books ever expect to attain it. They regard the authors, or supposed authors, as enlightened to a degree which is beyond the reach of their disciples, and receive their words as utterances of an unquestionable authority. But wherever a divine being is acknowledged, these books are regarded as emanating from him. Either they have fallen direct from heaven and been merely "seen" by their human editors, as was the case with the Vedic hymns; or their contents have been communicated in colloquies to holy men by the Deity himself, as happened with the Avesta; or an angel has revealed them to the prophet while in a fit or a state of ecstasy, as

Mahomet was made acquainted with the Suras of the Koran; or lastly, as is held to have been the case with the Jewish and Christian Scriptures, the mind of the writer has been at least so guided and informed by the Spirit of God, that in the words traced by his pen it was impossible he should err.

Such a conviction is expressly stated in the Second Epistle to Timothy, where it is said that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God." And a claim to even more than inspiration is put forward in the Apocalypse, whose author first calls his work "the Revelation of Jesus Christ," which he says God sent to him by an angel deputed for the purpose, and then proceeds to describe voices heard, and visions perceived; thus resting his prophetic knowledge not on supernatural information communicated to the mind, but on the direct testimony of his senses.

2. With this theory of inspiration, or of a more than human knowledge and wisdom, is closely connected an idea of *merit* to be obtained by reading such books, or hearing them read. With tedious iteration is this notion asserted in the later works of the Buddhist Canon. These indeed represent the degeneracy of the idea. One of them is so filled with the panegyrics pronounced upon itself by the Buddha or his hearers, and with the recital of the advantages to be obtained by him who reads it, that the student searches in vain under this mass of laudations for the substance of the book itself.[1] A 'Sûtra' translated by Schlagintweit from the Thibetan, and bearing the marks (according to its translator) of having been written at a period of "mystic modification of Buddhism," promises that,

[1] H. B. I., p. 536.

at a future period of intense and general distress this Sutra "will be an ablution for every kind of sin which has been committed in the meantime: all animated beings shall read it, and on account of it all sins shall be wiped away."[1] In another Sutra, termed the Karanda-vyuha, a great saint is introduced as exhorting his hearers to study this treatise, the efficaciousness of which he highly exalts.[2] Another speaker recites in several stanzas the advantages which will accrue to him who either reads the Karanda vyuha or hears it read.[3] Such was the force of the idea that the mere mechanical reading or copying of the sacred texts was in itself meritorious, that, by a still further separation of the outward action from its rational signification, the purely unintelligent process of turning a cylinder on which sentences of Scripture were printed came to be regarded as equally efficacious. An author who has given an interesting account of these cylinders observes that, as few men in Thibet knew how to read, and those who did had not time to exercise their powers, "the Lamas cast about for an expedient to enable the ignorant and the much-occupied man also to obtain the spiritual advantages" (namely, purification from sin and exemption from metempsychosis) "attached to an observance of the practice mentioned; they taught that the mere turning of a rolled manuscript might be considered an efficacious substitute for reading it." So completely does the one process take the place of the other that "each revolution of the cylinder is considered to be equal to the reading of as many sacred sentences or treatises as are enclosed in it, provided that the turn-

[1] B. T., p. 139. [2] H. B. I., p. 222. [3] Ibid., p. 226.

ing of the cylinder is done slowly and from right to left;" the slowness being a sign of a devout mind, and the direction of turning being a curious remnant of the original practice of reading, in which, as the letters run from left to right, the eye must move over them in that direction.[1] Similar sentiments, though not pushed to the same extravagance, prevail among the Hindus. One of the Brahmanas, or treatises appended to the metrical portion of the Vedas, lays down the principle that "of all the modes of exertion, which are known between heaven and earth, study of the Veda occupies the highest rank (in the case of him) who, knowing this, studies it."[2] Manu, one of the highest of Indian authorities, observes that "a Brahman who should destroy these three worlds, and eat food received from any quarter whatever, would incur no guilt if he retained in his memory the Rig-Veda. Repeating thrice with intent mind the Sanhita of the Rik, or the Yajush, or the Saman, with the Upanishads, he is freed from all his sins. Just as a clod thrown into a great lake is dissolved when it touches the water, so does all sin sink in the triple Veda."[3] Reading the Holy Scriptures is with the Parsees a positive duty. And these works, read in the proper spirit, are thought to exert upon earth an influence somewhat similar to that of the primæval Word at the origin of created beings.[4] It is needless to speak of the importance attached among Jews and Christians to the reading and re-reading of their Bibles, or of the spiritual benefits supposed to result therefrom. It is worth remarking, however, that

[1] B. T., pp. 230, 231.
[2] O. S. T., vol. iii. p. 22.
[3] Ibid., vol. iii. p. 25.
[4] Z. A. Q., p. 595.

this constant perusal of Holy Writ is altogether a different operation from that of studying it for the sake of knowing its contents. People read continually what they are already perfectly familiar with, and they neither gain, nor expect to gain, any fresh information from the performance. And this is a species of reading to which among Christian nations the Bible alone is subjected.

The genesis of this notion is not difficult to follow. Once let a given work be accepted as containing information on religious questions which man's unaided faculties could not have attained, and it is evident that there is no better way of qualifying himself for the performance of his obligations towards heaven than by studying that work. Its perusal and re-perusal will increase his knowledge of divine things, and render him more and more fit, the oftener he repeats it, to put that knowledge into practice. But if it is thus advantageous to the devout man to be familiar with the sacred writings of his faith, it is plain that the attention he gives to them must be in the highest degree agreeable to the divinity from whom they emanate. For, to put it on the lowest ground, it is a sign of respect. It renders it evident that he is not indifferent to the communication which his God has been pleased to make. It evinces a pious and reverential disposition. Hence not only is the reader benefited by such a study, but the Deity is pleased by it. Or if the books are not conceived as inspired by any deity, yet a careful attention to them shows a desire for wisdom, and a humble regard for the instructions of more highly-gifted men who in these religions stand in the place of gods. Thus the action

of reading these works, and becoming thoroughly familiar with their contents, is for natural reasons regarded as meritorious. But this is not all. An act which at first is meritorious as a means, tends inevitably to become meritorious as an end. Moreover, actions frequently repeated for some definite reason come to be repeated when that reason is absent. Thus, the reading of Sacred Books, originally a profitable exercise to the mind of the reader, is soon undertaken for its own sake, whether the mind of the reader be concerned in it or not. And the action, having become habitual, is stereotyped as a religious custom, and therefore a religious obligation. The words of the holy books are read aloud to a congregation, without effort or intelligence on their part, perhaps in a tongue which they do not comprehend. Even if the vernacular be employed, there is not the pretence of an effort to penetrate the sense of difficult passages. Holy Writ has become a charm, to be mechanically read and as mechanically heard, and the notion of merit—arising in the first instance from the high importance of understanding its meaning with a view to practising its precepts—now attaches to the mere repetition of the consecrated words.

3. The exact converse of this unintelligent reverence for the sacred writings is the excessive and oversubtle exercise of intelligence upon them. It is the common fate of such works to be made the subject of the most minute, most careful, and most constant scrutiny to which any of the productions of the human mind can be subjected. The pious and the learned alike submit them to an unceasing study. No phrase, no word, no letter, passes unobserved.

The result of this devout investigation naturally is, that much which in reality belongs to the mind of the reader is attributed to that of the writer. Approached with the fixed prepossession that they contain vast stores of superhuman wisdom, that which is so eagerly sought from them is certain to be found. Hence the natural and simple meaning of the words is set aside, or is relegated to a secondary place. All sorts of forced interpretations are put upon them with a view of compelling them to harmonise with that which it is supposed they ought to mean. Statements, doctrines, and allusions are discovered in them which not only have no existence in their pages, but which are absolutely foreign to the epoch at which they were written. This process of false interpretation is greatly favoured by distance of time. When an ancient book is approached by those who know but little of the external circumstances, or of the intellectual and spiritual atmosphere, of the age in which it was composed, much that was simple and plain enough to the contemporaries of the writer will be dubious and obscure to them. And when they are determined to find in the venerable classic nothing but perfect truth, the result of such conditions is an inevitable confusion. Their own actual notions of truth must at all hazards be discovered in the sacred pages. The assumption cannot be surrendered; all that does not agree with it must therefore be suitably explained.

Are proceedings or actions which shock the improved morality of a later age spoken of with approbation in the canonical books? Some evasion must be discovered which will reconcile ethics with belief. Are doctrines which the religion of a later age rejects

plainly enunciated, or statements of facts, which later investigation has shown to be impossible, unequivocally made? The inconvenient passages must be shown to bear another construction. Are there portions whose character appears too trivial or too mundane to be consistent with the dignity of works given for the instruction of mankind? These portions must be shown to possess a mystical significance; a spirit hidden beneath the letter; profound instruction veiled under ordinary phrases. Are the dogmas cherished as of supreme importance by subsequent generations unhappily not to be found in the text of Revelation? These dogmas must be read out of them by putting a strain upon words which apparently refer to some other subject. Perhaps, if they are not contained in them *totidem verbis*, they may be *totidem syllabis;* or if not even *totidem syllabis*, at least *totidem literis*. And the absence of a letter (like the k in shoulder-knots) can always be got over somehow. Lastly, are there palpable contradictions? At whatever cost they must be explained away, for Holy Writ, being inspired, can never contradict itself.

Let us consider a few of the most striking examples of these methods of treatment. China, usually so matter of fact, has manifested in this field a subtlety of interpretation not altogether unworthy of the more mystical India. The Ch'un Ts'ëw, one of the books of the Chinese Canon, is a historical compilation attributed to Confucius himself, and is therefore of more than ordinary authority even for a Sacred Book. Concerning one of the years of which it contains a record, the following statements are made:—

"In the ninth month, on Kang-seuh, the first day of the moon, the sun was eclipsed.

"In winter, in the tenth month, on Kang-shin, the first day of the moon, the sun was eclipsed."[1]

Two eclipses in such close proximity were of course an impossibility. Chinese scholars were fully aware of this, and knew, moreover, that the second eclipse mentioned did not take place. A similar mistake occurred in another chapter, so that there were two unquestionable blunders to be got over. No wonder then that "the critics," as Dr Legge says, "have vexed themselves with the question in vain." But one of them proposes an explanation. "In this year," he remarks, "and in the 24th year, we have the record of eclipses in successive months. According to modern chronologists such a thing could not be; but *perhaps it did occur in ancient times!*"[2] Dr Legge has italicised the concluding words, and put an exclamation after them, as if they embodied a surprising absurdity. But his experience of Biblical criticism must have presented him with abundant instances of similar interpretations of the glaring contradictions to modern science found in Scripture. Is it more ridiculous to suppose that two eclipses might have occurred in two months than to believe that the sun stood still, in other words, that the revolution of the earth on its axis ceased for a space of time? or that an ass could be endowed with human speech? or that a man, instead of dying, could rise from earth to heaven? And if these and similar strange occurrences be explained as miracles, then such miracles "did occur in ancient

[1] C. C., vol. v. p. 489.—Ch'un Ts'ëw, b. 9, ch. xxi. p. 5, 6.
[2] Ibid., vol. v. p. 491.

times," and do not now. Or if it be attempted, as it is by interpreters of the rationalistic school, to get over the difficulty by supposing a natural event as the foundation of the story—as one writer suggests that the descent of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost was a strong blast of wind—then European critics, like those of China, "vex themselves in vain."

No country, however, has done more than India, possibly none has done so much, in the peculiar exercise of ingenuity by which all sorts of senses are deduced from sacred texts. The Veda formed in that highly religious land the common basis on which each variety of philosophy was founded, and by which each was thought to be justified. Dr Muir has collected a number of facts in proof of the diverse interpretations that found defenders among the champions of the several schools. In these facts, according to him, "we find another illustration (1) of the tendency common to all dogmatic theologians to interpret in strict conformity to their own opinions the unsystematic and not always consistent texts of an earlier age which have been handed down by tradition as sacred and infallible, and to represent them as containing, or as necessarily implying, fixed and consistent systems of doctrine; as well as (2) of the diversity of view which so generally prevails in regard to the sense of such texts among writers of different schools, who adduce them with equal positiveness of assertion as establishing tenets and principles which are mutually contradictory or inconsistent."[1]

Exactly the same methods were applied to the sacred books of Buddhism. "It is in general," says

[1] O. S. T., vol. iii. p. xx.

Burnouf, "the same texts that serve as a foundation for all doctrines; only the explanation of these texts marks the naturalistic, theistic, moral or intellectual tendency."[1] To meet the case of contradictions occurring in the Buddhistic Sutras a theory of a double meaning has been invented. The various schools that had arisen in the course of time did not venture to reject the Sutras that failed to harmonise with their own opinions, as not having emanated from Buddha, but maintained he had not expressed them in the form of absolute truth. He had often, they thought, adapted himself to the conceptions of his hearers, and uttered what was directly contradictory to his veritable ideas. Hence his words must be taken in two senses; the palpable and the hidden sense.[2] As it has been with the Chinese Classics, with the Veda, and with the Tripitaka, so it has been with the Zend Avesta. Speaking of the progress of scholarship in deciphering the sense of that ancient work, Professor Max Müller justly observes that "greater violence is done by successive interpreters to sacred writings than to any other relics of ancient literature. Ideas grow and change, yet each generation tries to find its own ideas reflected in the sacred pages of their early prophets, and in addition to the ordinary influences which blur and obscure the sharp features of old words, artificial influences are here at work distorting the natural expression of words which have been invested with a sacred authority. Passages in the Veda or Zend Avesta which do not bear on religious or philosophical doctrines, are generally explained simply and naturally, even by the latest of

[1] H. B. I., p. 444. [2] Wassiljew, pp. 105, 329.

native commentators. But as soon as any word or sentence can be so turned as to support a doctrine, however modern, or a precept, however irrational, the simplest phrases are tortured and mangled till at last they are made to yield their assent to ideas the most foreign to the minds of the authors of the Veda and Zend Avesta."[1]

It is remarkable that almost identical expressions are employed by a Roman Catholic writer in reference to the efforts that have been made by theologians to discover the doctrine of the Trinity in the pages of the Hebrew Bible. I am glad to be able to quote an authority so unexceptionable as that of M. Didron for the proposition, that the poverty of the Old Testament in texts relating to the Trinity has caused the commentators to torture the sense of the words and the signification of facts. He adds the interesting information that artists, pushed on by the commentators, have represented the signs of the Trinity in scenes which did not admit of them. Thus, commentators and artists have united to find a revelation of the three persons of the Godhead in the three angels whom Abraham met in the plain of Mamre; in the three companions of Daniel who were thrown into the fiery furnace, and in other passages of equal relevance. No wonder, when such are the texts relied upon to prove the presence of this cardinal dogma, that M. Didron should observe that the Old Testament contains very few texts that are clear and precise upon the subject, and that in this portion of the Sacred Books we do not see a sufficient number of real and unquestionable manifestations of the Holy Trinity.[2]

[1] Chips, vol. i. p. 134. [2] Ic. Ch., pp. 514–517.

Perhaps, however, the most conspicuous instance of the power of preconceptions in deciding the sense of Holy Writ is the traditional interpretation of the Song of Solomon. In this little book, which is altogether secular in its subject and its nature, the love of a young damsel to her swain is described in peculiarly plain and sensuous language. But precisely because it was so plain was it necessary to find allegorical allusions under its rather glowing phrases. Hence such expressions as "let him kiss me with a kiss of his mouth: thy caresses are softer than wine," are held to refer to "the Church's love unto Christ," and an enthusiastic encomium passed by the Shulamite upon the physical perfections of her lover is called "a description of Christ by his graces." So, when another speaker, in this case a man, flatters a woman by enumerating the beauties of her form, the feet, the joints of her thighs, the navel, the belly, and the two breasts so passionately praised by her admirer, are thought in some mystic way to signify the graces of the Church. A passage referring to a young girl not yet fully developed is made out to be a foreshadowing of "the calling of the Gentiles," and the natural and simple appeal to a lover to make haste to come is "the Church praying for Christ's coming."

Equal, or nearly equal, absurdities are found in the Chinese interpretations of certain Odes contained in their classics. These Odes are, like the Song of Songs, mere expressions of human love. But the critics find in them profound historical allusions; history being the staple of the Chinese sacred books, as theology is of the Hebrew ones. Now it happened in China, as it has happened in Europe, that there was a traditional

meaning attached to this portion of the sacred books; and the traditional meaning was embodied in a Preface which was generally supposed to have descended from very ancient times, which came to be incorporated with the Odes, and thus appeared to rest on the same authority as the text itself. But a Chinese scholar, named Choo He, who examined the preface in a freer spirit than was usual among the commentators, formed a very different opinion as to its age and its authority. He believed it to be of much more recent date than was commonly supposed, and by no means to form an integral portion of the Odes. The prevailing theory was that the Preface had existed as a separate document in the time of a scholar named Maou, "and that he broke it up, prefixing to each Ode the portion belonging to it. The natural conclusion," observes Choo He, "is that the Preface had come down from a remote period, and that Hwang" (a scholar who, in one account, is said to have written the Preface) "merely added to it and rounded it off. In accordance with this, scholars generally hold that the first sentences in the introductory notices formed the original Preface which Maou distributed, and that the following portions were subsequently added. This view may appear reasonable, but when we examine those first sentences themselves, we find some of them which do not agree with the obvious meaning of the Odes to which they are prefixed, and give merely the rash and baseless expositions of the writers." Choo He adds, that after the prefatory notices were published as a portion of the text, "they appeared as if they were the production of the poets themselves, and the Odes seemed to be made from them as so

many themes. Scholars handed down a faith in them from one to another, and no one ventured to express a doubt of their authority. The text was twisted and chiselled to bring it into accordance with them, and nobody would undertake to say plainly that they were the work of the scholars of the Han dynasty." [1]

Ample confirmation of the justice of Choo He's opinion will be found on turning to the Odes and comparing them with the notices in the Preface, which bear a family likeness to the headings of the chapters in the Song of Songs. Here, for example, is an Ode :—

"If you, Sir, think kindly of me,
I will hold up my lower garments, and cross the Tsin.
If you do not think of me,
Is there no other person [to do so ?]
You foolish, foolish fellow!" [2]

The second stanza is identical, with this exception, that the name of the river is changed. Now this young lady's coquettish appeal to her lover is said in the Preface to be an expression "of the desire of the people of Ch'ing to have the condition of the State rectified." [3] Another Ode runs thus :—

1. "The sun is in the east,
And that lovely girl
Is in my chamber.
She is in my chamber;
She treads in my footsteps, and comes to me.

2. "The moon is in the east,
And that lovely girl
Is inside my door.
She is inside my door;
She treads in my footsteps, and hastens away." [4]

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[1] C. C., vol. iv. Proleg., p. 33.
[2] C. C., vol. iv. p. 140.—She King, pt. i. b. 7, ode 13.
[3] C. C., vol. iv. Proleg., p. 51.
[4] C. C., vol. iv. p. 153.—She King, pt. i. b. 8, ode 4.

This simple poem is supposed by the Preface to be "directed against the decay [of the times]." Observe the theory that anything appearing in a sacred book must have a moral purpose. "The relation of ruler and minister was neglected. Men and women sought each other in lewd fashion; and there was no ability to alter the customs by the rules of propriety."[1] A commentator, studious to discover the hidden moral, urges that the incongruous fact of the young woman's coming at sunrise and going at moonrise "should satisfy us that, under the figuration of these lovers, is intended a representation of Ts'e, with bright or with gloomy relations between its ruler and officers."[2] In another Ode a lady laments her husband's absence, pathetically saying that while she does not see him, her heart cannot forget its grief:

> "How is it, how is it,
> That he forgets me so very much?"

is the burden of every stanza. This piece, according to the Preface, was directed against a duke, "who slighted the men of worth whom his father had collected around him, leaving the State without those who were its ornament and strength."[3]

With such methods as these there is no marvel which may not be accomplished. And when, by the lapse of many centuries, the very language of the sacred records has been forgotten,—as the Sanscrit of the Vedas was forgotten by the Hindus, the Zend by the Parsees, and the Hebrew by the Jews—the process of perversion is still further favoured. The original

[1] C. C., vol. iv. Proleg., p. 52.
[2] C. C., vol. iv. p. 153, note.
[3] C. C., vol. iv. p. 200, and the note.—She King, pt. i. b. 11, ode 7.

works are then accessible but to a few; and when these few undertake to explain them in the ordinary tongue, they will do so with a gloss suggested by their own imperfect comprehension of the thoughts and language of the past.

These, then, may be accepted as the external marks of Sacred Books: 1. The unusual veneration accorded to them by the adherents of each religion, on the ground that they contain truths beyond the reach of human intelligence when not specially enlightened; or in other words, the theory of their *inspiration*. 2. The notion of *religious merit* attached to reading them. 3. The application to them of *forced interpretation*, in order to bring them into accordance with the assumptions made regarding them.

B. Passing now to the internal marks by which writings of this class are distinguished, we shall find several which, taken together, constitute them altogether a peculiar branch of literature.

1. Their subjects are generally confined within a certain definite range, but in the limits of that range there is a considerable portion which has the peculiarity that their investigation transcends the unaided powers of the human intellect. Almost the whole of the vast field of theological dogma comes under this head. The sublimer subjects usually dealt with, and not only dealt with, but emphatically dwelt upon, in the Sacred Books are, the nature of the Deity and his mode of action towards mankind; the creation of the world and its various constituent parts, including man himself; the motives of the Deity in these exercises of his power; the dogmas to be believed in reference to the Deity himself and in reference to other super-

human powers or agencies, whether good or bad; and the condition of the soul after death with the rewards and the punishments of vicious conduct. Coming down to matters of a less purely celestial character, but still beyond the reach of the uninspired faculties of ordinary minds, they treat of the primitive condition of mankind when first placed upon the earth; of his earliest history; of the rites by which the divine being is to be worshipped; of the sacrifices which are to be offered to him; of the ceremonies by which his favour is to be won. Here we move in a region which is at least intelligible and free from mysteries, though it is plain that we could not arrive at any certain conclusions on such things as these without divine assistance and superhuman illumination. Lastly, the Sacred Books of all nations profess to give information on a subject the nature of which is altogether mundane, and with regard to which truth is accessible to all, inspired or uninspired;—the rules of moral conduct. These are, I believe, the main subjects which will be found treated of in the various books that lay claim to the title of Sacred. These subjects may be briefly classified as, 1. Metaphysical speculations as to the nature of the Deity. 2. Doctrines as to the past or future existence of the soul. 3. Accounts of the creation. 4. Lives of prophets or collections of their sayings. 5. Theories as to the origin of evil. 6. Prescriptions as to ritual. 7. Ethics. That this does not pretend to be an exhaustive classification, I need hardly say; other topics are treated in some of them to which no allusion is made, and all of these topics themselves are not treated in all. But they are those with which the

Sacred Books are principally concerned; and more than this, they are those in the treatment of which these books are especially peculiar. One important feature both of the Chinese and the Jewish Canon is passed over, namely, their historical records. If these records were not exceptional appearances in sacred works, or if, though exceptional, they presented some essential singularity marking them off from all ordinary history, they should be included in the list of subjects. But as the Chinese Shoo King are perfectly commonplace annals of matters of fact; and as the Books of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles are not otherwise distinguished from secular history than by their theological theories—in respect of which they are included under the previous heads—I see no reason to include history among the matters generally treated in Sacred Books. It is right, however, to note in passing that in these two instances it is found in them.

2. Since, however, it will be obvious to all that these great topics are discussed in many other works which have no pretension to be thought sacred, we must seek for some further and more definite criterion by which to separate them from general literature. And we shall find it in the *manner* in which the above-named subjects are treated. The great distinction between sacred and non-sacred writings in their manner of dealing with these great questions is the tone of authority, and if the expression may be used, of finality, assumed by the former. There is no appeal beyond them to a higher authority than their own. Having God as their author and inspirer, or being the product of the supreme elevation of reason,

they take for granted that human beings will not question or cavil at their statements. While other writers, when seeking to enforce the doctrines of any positive religion, invariably rest their contentions, implicitly or explicitly, on some superior authority, referring their readers or hearers either to the Vedas, the Koran, the Bible, the Church, or some other recognised standard of belief, and would think it in the last degree presumptuous to claim assent except to what can be found in or deduced from that standard; while those teachers who are not the exponents of any positive, revealed religion, endeavour to prove their conclusions from the common intuitions or the common reasoning faculties of mankind; the writers of these books do neither. They seem to speak with a full confidence that their words need no confirmation either from authority or from reason. If they tell us the story of the creation of the world, they do not think it needful to inform us from what sources the narrative is derived. If they reveal the character of God, it is without explaining the means by which their insight has been obtained. If they lay down the rules of religious or moral conduct, it is not done with the modesty of fallible teachers, but with the voice of unqualified command emanating from the plenitude of power. Of their decisions there can be no discussion; from their sentences there is no appeal.

3. It corresponds with this character that Sacred Books should very generally be anonymous; or more strictly speaking, impersonal; that is, that they should not be put forward in the name of an individual, and that no individual should take credit for their authorship. Understanding the expression in this some-

what wider sense, we may say that anonymity is a general characteristic of this class of writings. Their authors do not desire to invite attention to their own personality, or to claim assent on the ground of respect or consideration towards themselves. On the contrary, they withdraw entirely from observation; they appear to be thoroughly engrossed in the greatness of the subject; and to write not from any deliberate design or with any artistic plan, but simply from the fulness of the inspiration by which they are controlled. Hence not only are the names of the authors in most cases completely lost to us, but they have left us not a hint or an indication by which we could discover what manner of men they were. Even where the name of a writer has been preserved to us, it is often rather by some accident altogether independent of the book, and which in no way alters its anonymous character. We happen to know, on what seems to be good authority, that Laò-tsé composed the Taò-tĕ-kīng, but assuredly there is not a syllable in the work itself which indicates its author. We happen to know beyond a doubt that Mahomet composed the Koran; but the theory of the book is, that it had no human author at all, and it was put forth, not as the prophet's composition, but as the literal reproduction of revelations made to him from heaven. The most noteworthy exceptions are the prophets of the Old Testament and the Pauline, Petrine and Johannine Epistles of the New. But of the prophets, though their names are indeed given, the great majority are little more than a mere name to us; while large portions of the prophecies, attributed in the Jewish Canon to some celebrated prophet, are in reality the work of unknown

writers. This is notoriously the case with the whole of the latter part of our Isaiah; it is the case with parts of Jeremiah; it is the case with Malachi (whose real name is not preserved); it is the case with Daniel.

The Pauline Epistles offer indeed a marked exception to the rule; and some of them are of doubtful authenticity. The Epistles of Peter, of John, of James and Jude, even if their authorship be correctly assigned, are of too limited extent to constitute an exception of any importance. The rest of the Christian Bible follows the rule. Like the Vedic hymns, like the Sutras of Buddhism, like the records of the life and doctrines of Khung-tsé, like the Avesta, all the larger books of the Bible—except the prophets—are anonymous. The whole of the historical portion of the Old Testament, the four Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, the Epistle to the Hebrews, are—whatever names tradition may have associated with them—strictly the production of unknown authors. This characteristic is one of very high importance, because it indicates—along with another which I am about to mention—the spirit in which these works were written. They were written as it were unconsciously and undesignedly; not of course without a knowledge on the writer's part of what he was about, but without that conscious and distinct intention of composing a literary work with which ordinary men sit down to write a book. Flowing from the depths of religious feeling, they were the reflection of the age that brought them forth. Generations past and present, nations, communities, brotherhoods of believers, spoke in them and through them. They were not only the work of him who first uttered them or wrote them;

others worked with him, thought with him, spoke with him; they were not merely the voice of an individual, but the voice of an epoch and of a people. Hence the utter absence of any apparent and palpable authorship, the disappearance of the individual in the grandeur of the subject. This phenomenon is not indeed quite peculiar to Sacred Books. It belongs also to those great national epics which likewise express the feelings of whole races and communities of men; to the Mahabharata, to the Ramayana, to the Iliad and the Odyssey, to the Volsungen and Nibelungen Sagas, to the Eddas, to the legends of King Arthur and his knights. These poems, or these poetical tales, are anonymous, and they occupy in the veneration of the people a rank which is second only to that of books actually sacred. In some other respects they bear a resemblance to Sacred Books, but these books differ from them in one important particular, which of itself suffices to place them in a different category. What that particular is must now be explained.

4. If I were to describe it by a single word, I should call it their *formlessness*. The term is an awkward one, but I know of no other which so exactly describes this most peculiar feature of Sacred Books. Like the earth in its chaotic condition before creation, they are "without form." That artistic finish, that construction, combination of parts into a well-defined edifice, that arrangement of the whole work upon an apparent plan, subservient to a distinct object, which marks every other class of the productions of the human mind, is entirely wanting to them. They read not unfrequently as if they had been

carelessly jotted down without the smallest regard to order, or the least attention to the effect to be produced on the mind of the reader. Sometimes they may even be said to have neither beginning, middle, nor end. We might open them anywhere and close them anywhere without material difference. Sometimes there is a distinct progress in the narrative, but it is nevertheless wholly without methodical combination of the separate parts into a well-ordered whole. Herein they differ also from those poetical Epics which we have found agreeing with them in being virtually anonymous. Nothing can exceed the grace, the finish, the perfection of style, of those immortal poems which are known as Homeric. The northern Epics are indeed simpler, ruder, far more destitute of literary merit. The first part, for instance, of the Edda Saemundar (which perhaps ought not to be called an Epic at all) is to the last degree uncouth and barbarous. But then the subject-matter of this portion of the Edda is such as belongs properly to Sacred Books, and had it ever been actually current among the Scandinavians as a canonical work—of which we have no evidence—it would be entitled to a place among them. When we come to the second or heroic portion of this Edda, the case is different. The mode of treatment is still rude and unattractive, but if, unrepelled by the outward form, we study the longest of the narratives which this division contains—the Saga of the Volsungs—we shall discover in it a tale, which for the exquisite pathos of its sentiments, for the deep and tragic interest which centres round the principal characters, for the vivid delineation by a few brief touches of the

intensest suffering, is scarcely surpassed even by the far more finished productions of Hellenic genius. No doubt the foundation of the story is mythological, and this throws over many of its incidents a grotesqueness which goes far in modern eyes to mar the effect. But the mythological incidents of the Iliad and the Odyssey are grotesque also, and it requires all the genius of the poet to render them tolerable. Apart from this groundwork, the Volsunga-Saga treats its personages as human, and claims from its readers a purely human interest in their various adventures. It relates these adventures in a connected form, it depicts the feelings of the several actors with all the sympathy of the dramatist, and draws no moral, teaches no lesson. In the whole range of sacred literature I recollect nothing like this. Stories are doubtless told in it, but we are made to feel that they are subservient to an ulterior purpose. In the Old Testament and in the New, they serve to enforce the theological doctrines of the writers; in the works of the Buddhists they generally impress on the hearers some useful lesson as to the reward of merit, and the punishment of demerit, in a future existence. Of the genuine and simple relation of a rather elaborate romance, terminating in itself, there is probably no instance. Such stories as are related are moral tales, and not romances; and they are generally too short to absorb, in any considerable degree, the interest of the reader.

While this is the difference between secular and Sacred Books in respect of their narrative portions, the sacred are as a whole even more decidedly below the secular in all that belongs to style and composi-

tion. The dullest historian generally contrives to render his chronicle more lucid, and therefore more readable, than the authors of canonical books. In these last there is the most absolute disregard of artistic or literary excellence. Hence they are, with scarcely an exception, very tedious reading. M. Renan observes of the Koran that its continuous perusal is almost intolerable. Burnouf hesitates to inflict upon his readers the tedium he himself has suffered from the study of certain Tantras. The inconceivable tediousness of the Buddhistic Sutras—excepting the earlier and simpler ones—is well known to those who have read or attempted to read such works, as, for instance, the Saddharma Pundarika. The Chinese Classics are less repulsive, but few readers would care to study them for long together. The Vedic hymns, though full of mythological interest, are yet difficult and unpleasant reading, both from their monotony and the looseness of the connection between each verse and sentence. The Brahmanas are barely readable. The Avesta is far from attractive. The Bible, though vastly superior in this respect to all the rest of its class, is yet not easy to read for any length of time without fatigue. Doubtless, if taken as a special study, with a view to something which we desire to ascertain from it, we may without difficulty read large portions at a time; yet we see that Christians, who read it for edification, invariably choose in their public assemblies to confine themselves to very moderate sections of it indeed, while they will listen to sermons of many times the length. There can be little doubt that a similar practice is pursued in private devotion. Single

chapters, or at most a few chapters, are selected; these are perused, and perhaps made the object of meditation; but even the most fervent admirers of the Bible would probably find it difficult to read through its longer books without pausing. They do not, so to speak, "carry us on." It was essential to dwell on this tediousness of Sacred Books, because it forms one of their most marked characteristics. Nor does it arise, as is often the case, from indifference or aversion on the part of the reader. Other books repel us because we have no interest in the subjects with which they deal. In these, the keenest interest in the subjects with which they deal will not suffice to render their presentation tolerable.

Section I.—The Thirteen King.[1]

Sacred Books in general are in China termed *King*. But as the Chinese Buddhists have their own sacred literature, and as Taou-ists are in possession of a sacred work of their founder, Laò-tsé, I call the Books

[1] In treating of the Sacred Books of the Confucian School in China, I rely entirely upon the admirable and (so far as it has yet gone) complete work of the Rev. Dr James Legge. Although I have consulted other publications, I have not drawn my information from them, because it was at once evident that Dr Legge's "Chinese Classics" was immeasurably superior to all that had preceded it on the same subject. Unfortunately, the very thoroughness of the work renders it voluminous; and it thus happens that the author has not fulfilled more than a portion of the promise held out at its commencement. It must be the earnest hope of all who are interested in these studies that the learned missionary will live to complete his design; meantime, we are obliged to confine ourselves to a notice of that portion of the Classics which he has translated. For Pauthier's French translation of the Chinese Classics (in the Panthéon Littéraire: "Les Livres Sacrés de l'Orient") embraces only that portion of the King which is to be found in the hitherto-published volumes of Dr Legge.

of the State religion, that is, of the followers of Confucius, *the* King *par excellence*. For Confucianism is the official creed of the Government of China, and the Confucian Canon forms the subject of the Civil Service examinations which qualify for office. According to a competent authority, "a complete knowledge of the whole of them, as well as of the standard notes and criticisms by which they are elucidated, is an indispensable condition towards the attainment of the higher grades of literary and official rank."[1]

The writings now recognised as especially sacred in China are "the five King," and "the four Shoo."[2] *King* is a term of which the proper signification is "the warp, the chain of a web; thence that which progresses equally, that which constitutes a fundamental law, the normal. Applied to books, it indicates those that are regarded as canonical; as an absolute standard, either in general or with reference to some definite object."[3] In the words of another Sinologue, it is "the Rule, the Law, a book of canonical authority, a classical book."[4] The word seems therefore on the whole to correspond most nearly to what we mean by a "canonical book." *Shoo* means "Writings or Books." The four Shoo, of which I shall speak first, are these:—A 1. The Lun Yŭ, or Digested Conversations (of Confucius). A 2. The Ta Hëŏ, or Great Learning. A 3. The Chung Yung, or Doctrine of the Mean. A 4. The Works of Măng-tsze, or Mencius. The five King are these:—B 1. The Yih, or Book of

[1] Chinese, vol. ii. p. 48.

[2] Of which an English translation by David Collie, entitled "The Chinese Classical Work, commonly called the Four Books," was published at Malacca in 1828.

[3] T. T. K., p. lxviii. [4] L. T., p. ix.

Changes.[1] B 2. The Shoo, or Book of History. B 3. The She, or Book of Poetry. B 4. The Le Ke, or Record of Rites. B 5. The Ch'un Ts'ew, or Spring and Autumn, a chronicle of events from B.C. 721-B.C. 480. The oldest enumerations specified only the five King, to which the Yoke, or Record of Music (now in the Le Ke), was sometimes added, making six. There was also a division into nine King; and in the compilation made by order of Tâe-Tsung (who reigned in the 7th century A.D.) there are specified thirteen King, which consist of:[2]— 1–7. The five King, including three editions of the Ch'un Ts'ew. 8. The Lun Yu (A 1.) 9. Măng-tsze (A 4.) 10. The Chow Le, or Ritual of Chow. 11. The E Le, or Ceremonial Usages. 12. The Urh Ya, a sort of ancient dictionary. 13. The Heaou King, or Classic of Filial Piety. The apparent omission of the Ta Hëŏ (A 2) and the Chung Yung (A 3) is accounted for by the fact that both are included in the Le Ke (B 4). The only works which it is at present in my power to speak of in detail are those classified as A 1 to A 4, and as B 2.

The authenticity of these works is considered to be above reasonable suspicion; for though an emperor who reigned in the third century B.C., did indeed order (B.C. 212) that they should all be destroyed, yet this emperor died not long after the issue of his edict, which was formally abrogated after twenty-two years; and subsequent dynasties took pains to preserve and recover the missing volumes. As it is of course

[1] Noticed in Pauthier, p. 137.

[2] Sir J. Davis (The Chinese ii. 48) reckons only nine King, those enumerated above. I presume that the remaining four enjoy an inferior degree of veneration.

improbable that every individual would obey the frantic order of the emperor who enjoined their destruction, there appears to be sufficient ground for Dr Legge's conclusion, that we possess the actual works which were already extant in the time of Confucius, or (in so far as they referred to him) were compiled by his disciples or their immediate successors.

SUBDIVISION I.—*The Lun Yu.*

1. The first of the four Books is the Lun Yu, or "Digested Conversations." From internal evidence it seems to have been compiled in its actual form, not by the immediate disciples of Confucius, but by their disciples. Its date would be "about the end of the fourth, or beginning of the fifth, century before Christ;" that is, about 400 B.C. It bears a nearer resemblance to the Christian Gospels than any other book contained in the Chinese Classics, being in fact a minute account, by admiring hands, of the behaviour, character, and doctrine, of the great Master, Confucius. Since, however, it contains no notice of the events of his life in chronological order, it answers much more accurately to the description given by Papias of the "λόγια" composed by Matthew in the Hebrew dialect than to that of any of our canonical Gospels.

Biographical materials may indeed be discovered in it; but they occur only as incidental allusions, subservient to the main object of preserving a record of his sayings. In the minute and painstaking mode in which this task is performed there is even a resemblance to Boswell's "Johnson:" as in that celebrated work, we have as it were a photographic picture of

the great man's conversation, taken by a reverent and humble follower. And as there is a total absence of that fondness for the marvellous and that tendency to exaggerate the Master's powers which so generally characterise traditional accounts of religious teachers, we may fairly infer that we have here a trustworthy, and, in the main, accurate representation of Confucius' personality and of his teaching. As I have largely drawn upon this work in writing the Life of that prophet, I need not now detain the reader with any further quotations.

SUBDIVISION 2.—*The Ta Hëŏ.*

Passing to the Ta Hëŏ, or Great Learning, we find ourselves occupied with a book which bears the same kind of relationship to the Lun Yu as the Epistle to the Hebrews does to the Gospels. This work is altogether of a doctrinal character; and as in the Epistle, the exposition of the doctrines is by no means so clear and simple as in the oral instructions of the founder of the school. The Ta Hëŏ is attributed by Chinese tradition to K'ung Keih, the grandson of Confucius; but its authorship is in fact, like that of the Epistle, unknown. It was added to the Le Ke, or Record of Rites, in the second century A.D.

It begins with certain paragraphs which are attributed, apparently without authority, to Confucius; and all that follows is supposed to be a commentary on this original text. The text begins thus :—

1. "What the Great Learning teaches, is—to illustrate illustrious virtue; to renovate the people; and to rest in the highest excellence. . . . .

4. "The ancients who wished to illustrate illustrious virtue throughout the Empire, first ordered well their own States. Wishing to order well their States, they first regulated their families. Wishing to regulate their families, they first cultivated their persons. Wishing to cultivate their persons, they first rectified their hearts. Wishing to rectify their hearts, they first sought to be sincere in their thoughts. Wishing to be sincere in their thoughts, they first extended to the utmost their knowledge. Such extension of knowledge lay in the investigation of things."

After a few more verses of text, we come to the "Commentary of the philosopher Tsăng," which is mainly occupied with what purports to be an explanation of the process described in the foregoing verses. For instance, the 6th chapter "explains making the thoughts sincere," the seventh, "rectifying the mind and cultivating the person;" until at last we arrive at the right manner of conducting "the government of the State, and the making of the Empire peaceful and happy." The object of the treatise is therefore practical, and the subject a favourite one with the Chinese Classics, that of Government. Great stress is laid on the influence of a good example on the part of the ruler; and those model sovereigns, "Yaou and Shun," are appealed to as illustrations of its good effect in such hands as theirs. In the course of the exposition of these principles, we meet with dry maxims of political economy, worthy of modern times, such as this:—

"There is a great course also for the production of wealth. Let the producers be many and the con-

sumers few. Let there be activity in the production, and economy in the expenditure. Then the wealth will always be sufficient."[1]

Subdivision 3.—*The Chung Yung.*

The composition of the Chung Yung, or "Doctrine of the Mean," is universally attributed in China to K'ung Keih, or Tsze-sze, the grandson of Confucius. The external evidence of his authorship is, in Dr Legge's opinion, sufficient; though if that which he has produced be all that is extant, it does not seem to be at all conclusive. Some quotations from it have already been made in the notice of Confucius, many of whose utterances are contained in it.

Its principal object is, or seems to be, to inculcate the excellence of what is called "the Mean," but the explanation of what is intended by the Mean is far from clear. The course of the Mean, however, is that taken by the sage; the virtue which is according to the Mean is perfect; the superior man embodies it in his practice; ordinary men cannot keep to it; mean men act contrary to it; and Shun, a model emperor, "determined the Mean" between the bad and good elements in men, "and employed it in his government of the people." The Mean, from the attributes thus assigned to it, would appear to be a state of complete and hardly attainable moral perfection, of which they who have offered an example in their conduct have (at least in modern times) been rare indeed. In the beginning of the treatise we learn that:—

[1] Ta Hëŏ.

1. "What Heaven has conferred is called THE NATURE; an accordance with this nature is called THE PATH *of duty;* the regulation of this path is called INSTRUCTION."

4. "While there are no stirrings of pleasure, anger, sorrow, or joy, the mind may be said to be in the state of EQUILIBRIUM. When those feelings have been stirred, and they act in their due degree, there ensues what may be called the state of HARMONY. This EQUILIBRIUM is the great root *from which grow all the human actings* in the world, and this HARMONY is the universal path *which they all should pursue.*[1]

5. "Let the states of equilibrium and harmony exist in perfection, and a happy order will prevail throughout heaven and earth, and all things will be nourished and flourish."[2]

In another part of the work, "the path" is described as not being "far from the common indications of consciousness;" and the following rule is laid down with regard to it:—

"When one cultivates to the utmost the principles of his nature, and exercises them on the principle of reciprocity, he is not far from the path. What you do not like, when done to yourself, do not do to others."[3]

A large and important portion of the goodness required of those who would walk in the path is sincerity. Sincerity is declared to be the "way of Heaven,"[4] and it is laid down that "it is only he who is possessed of the most complete sincerity that can

[1] The italics, here and in future quotations, are in Legge.
[2] Chung Yung. [3] Ibid., xiii. 3. [4] Ibid., xx. 18

exist under Heaven, who can give its full development to his nature." Having this power, he is said to be able to give development to the natures of other men, animals, and things, and even "to assist the transforming and nourishing powers of Heaven and Earth," so that "he may with Heaven and Earth form a ternion."[1]

The doctrine of "Heaven" as a protecting power holds no inconsiderable place in this short treatise. Thus it is stated that "Heaven, in the production of things, is surely bountiful to them, according to their qualities."[2] "In order to know men" the sovereign "may not dispense with a knowledge of Heaven."[3] "The way of Heaven and Earth may be completely declared in one sentence. They are without any doubleness, and so they produce things in a manner that is unfathomable.

"The way of Heaven and Earth is large and substantial, high and brilliant, far reaching and long enduring."[4]

And in a very high-flown passage on the character of the sage—said to refer to the author's grandfather—he is spoken of as "the equal of Heaven."[5]

Heaven, however, is not the only superhuman power that is mentioned in the Chung Yung. In one of its chapters we are told that Confucius thus expressed himself:—

"How abundantly do spiritual beings display the powers that belong to them!

"We look for them, but do not see them; we listen

1 Chung Yung, xx. 7.
2 Ibid., xvii. 3.
3 Ibid., xxii.
4 Ibid., xxvi. 7, 8.
5 Ibid., xxxi. 3.

to, but do not hear them; yet they enter into all things, and there is nothing without them.

"They cause all the people in the Empire to fast and purify themselves, and array themselves in their richest dresses, in order to attend at their sacrifices. Then, like overflowing water, they seem to be over the heads, and on the right and left *of their worshippers.*"[1]

This positive expression of opinion is scarcely consistent with the habitual reserve of Kung-tse on subjects of this kind,[2] and were it not that it rests apparently on adequate authority, we might be tempted to reject it as apocryphal.

SUBDIVISION 4.—*The works of Măng-tsze*

The next place in the Chinese Scriptures is occupied by the works of Măng-tsze, the philosopher Măng, or as he is frequently called, Mencius. Măng lived nearly 200 years later than Confucius, having been born about 371, and having died in 288 B.C. He was not an original teacher asserting independent authority, and has no claim to the title of prophet. On the contrary, he was an avowed disciple of Confucius, to whose *dicta* he paid implicit reverence, and whom he quoted with the respect due to the exalted character which the sage had already acquired in the eyes of his school.

The so-called "Works of Măng" are not original compositions of this philosopher, but collections of his sayings, resembling the Lun Yu, or Confucian Analects. Whether he compiled them, or took any part in their

[1] Chung Yung, xvi. 1–3. [2] Lun Yu, vii. 20.

compilation himself, is uncertain. But, considering their character, the more probable hypothesis seems to be that they were committed to writing by his friends, or disciples, either during his own life, or immediately after his death.

The evidence of their antiquity and authenticity must be very briefly touched upon. The earliest notice of Măng is antecedent to the Ts'in dynasty (255-206 B.C.), that is, within thirty-three years after his death. We are indebted for it to Seun K'ing, who "several times makes mention of" Măng, and who in one chapter of his works, "quotes his arguments, and endeavours to set them aside." In the next place, we have accounts of him, and references to his writings, in K'ung Foo, prior to the Han dynasty, that is, before 206 B.C. Thirdly, he is quoted by writers from 186-178 B.C., under the Han dynasty. About 100 B.C. occurs the earliest mention now known of Măng's works. It emanates from Sze-ma Tseen, who attributes to Măng himself the composition of "seven books." While in a catalogue of the date A.D. 1, the works of Măng are entered as being "in eleven books;" a discrepancy which has given rise to perplexities among Chinese scholars, with which we need not concern ourselves. Suffice it to say, that Măng's works, as we now possess them, consist only of seven books, and are not known to have ever consisted of more.

This evidence would appear to be sufficient to prove the antiquity of the collection, though not its Mencian authorship. Whoever may have been its author, it was not admitted among the Sacred Books till many centuries after it had been received among scholars

as a valuable, though not classical, work. Under the Sung dynasty, which began to reign about A.D. 960-970, the works of Măng were at length placed on a level with the Lun Yu, as part of the great Bible of China.

On the whole, Măng's writings are of little interest for European readers, and I shall not trouble mine with any elaborate account of them. They are mainly occupied with the question of the good government of the Empire. What constitutes a good ruler? on what principles should the administration of public affairs be carried on? how can the people be rendered happy and the whole Empire prosperous? these are the sort of inquiries that chiefly engaged the attention of Măng, and to which he sought to furnish satisfactory replies. At the courts of the monarchs who received him, he inculcated benevolent conduct towards their subjects, with a paternal regard for their welfare, and sometimes boldly reproved unjust or negligent rulers. Holding, in common with the rest of his school, the doctrine of a superintendence of human affairs by a power named Heaven, he asserted in uncompromising terms the theory that Heaven expresses its will through the instrumentality of the people at large. "Vox populi, vox Dei," is the sentiment that animates the following passage, which contains one of the most courageous assertions of popular rights to be found in the productions of any age or country:—

"Wan Chang said, 'Was it the case that Yaou gave the empire to Shun?'[1] Mencius said, 'No. The emperor cannot give the empire to another.'

[1] Yaou and Shun are the ideal Chinese emperors, and belong to a mythical age. Shun was not the legitimate successor of Yaou, who

"'Yes;—but Shun had the empire. Who gave it to him?'

"'Heaven gave it to him,' was the answer.

"'Heaven gave it to him:—did *Heaven* confer its appointment on him with specific injunctions?'

"*Mencius* replied, 'No. Heaven does not speak. It simply showed its will by his personal conduct, and his conduct of affairs.'

"'It showed its will by his personal conduct and his conduct of affairs:—how was this?' Mencius' answer was, 'The empire [? emperor] can present a man to Heaven, but he cannot make Heaven give that man the empire. A prince can present a man to the emperor, but he cannot cause the emperor to make that man a prince. A great officer can present a man to his prince, but he cannot cause the prince to make that man a great officer. Yaou presented Shun to Heaven, and the people accepted him. Therefore I say, Heaven does not speak. It simply indicated its will by his personal conduct and his conduct of affairs.'

"*Chang* said, 'I presume to ask how it was that *Yaou* presented *Shun* to Heaven, and Heaven accepted him; and that he exhibited him to the people, and the people accepted him.' *Mencius* replied, 'He caused him to preside over the sacrifices, and all the spirits were well pleased with them;—thus Heaven accepted him. He caused him to preside over the conduct of affairs, and affairs were well administered, so that the people reposed under

had raised him from poverty, and given him his two daughters in marriage. On Yaou's death, his son at first succeeded him, and Shun withdrew; but the latter was soon called to the throne by the general desire.

him;—thus the people accepted him. Heaven gave *the empire* to him. The people gave it to him. Therefore I said, The emperor cannot give the empire to another.

"'Shun assisted Yaou in the government for twenty and eight years;—this was more than man could have done, and was from Heaven. After the death of Yaou, when the three years' mourning was completed, Shun withdrew from the son of Yaou to the south of South river. The princes of the empire, however, repairing to court, went not to the son of Yaou, but they went to Shun. Singers sang not the son of Yaou, but they sang Shun. Therefore I said, Heaven *gave him the empire.* It was after these things that he went to the Middle kingdom, and occupied the emperor's seat. If he had, *before these things,* taken up his residence in the palace of Yaou, and had applied pressure to the son of Yaou, it would have been an act of usurpation, and not the gift of Heaven.

"'This sentiment is expressed in the words of The great Declaration,—*Heaven sees according as my people see; Heaven hears according as my people hear.*'"[1]

Mâng's notion of what a really good government should do is fully explained at the end of the first part of the first book, in an exhortation to the king of Ts'e. His Majesty, he observed, should "institute a government whose action shall all be benevolent," for then his kingdom will be resorted to by officers of the court, farmers, merchants, and persons who are aggrieved by their own rulers. The

[1] The Italics are mine.—Mâng-tsze, b. 5, pt. i. ch. v.

king must take care "to regulate the livelihood of the people," in order that all may have enough for parents, wives, and children; for "they are only men of education, who without a certain livelihood, are able to maintain a fixed heart. As to the people, if they have not a certain livelihood, it follows that they will not have a fixed heart. And if they have not a fixed heart, there is nothing which they will not do, in the way of self-abandonment, of moral deflection, of depravity, and of wild licence. When they have thus been involved in crime, to follow them up and punish them,—this is to entrap the people. How can such a thing as entrapping the people be done under the rule of a benevolent man?" With a view then to their material and moral well-being, mulberry trees should be planted, the breeding seasons of domestic animals be carefully attended to, the labour necessary to cultivate farms not be interfered with, and "careful attention paid to education in schools." And it has never been known that the ruler in whose State these things were duly performed "did not attain to the Imperial dignity."[1] The only virtue required for "the attainment of Imperial sway" is "the love and protection of the people; with this there is no power which can prevent a ruler from attaining it."[2] In accordance with his decided opinions as to the right of the people to be consulted in the appointment of their rulers, he advised the same king to be guided entirely by popular feeling in assuming, or not assuming, the government of a neighbouring territory which he

[1] Măng-tsze, b. 1, pt. i. ch. vii. pp. 18–24.
[2] Ibid., b. 1, pt. i. ch. vii. p. 3.

had conquered. "If the people of Yen will be pleased with your taking possession of it, then do so. . . . If the people of Yen will not be pleased with your taking possession of it, then do not do so."[1]

Măng was something of a political economist as well as a statesman. There is in his writings a just and striking defence of the division of labour, in opposition to the primitive simplicity recommended by a man named Heu Hing, who wished the rulers to cultivate the soil with their own hands. Măng's answer to Heu Hing's disciple is in the form of an *ad hominem* argument, showing that, as Heu Hing himself does not manufacture his own clothes or make his own pots and pans, but obtains them in exchange for grain, in order that all his time may be devoted to agriculture, it is absurd to suppose that government is the only business which can advantageously be pursued along with husbandry, as Heu Hing desired.[2]

It was not enough, however, in Măng's eyes that a sovereign should conduct the government of his country in accordance with the great ethical and economical maxims he laid down; he must also pay strict attention to the rules of Chinese etiquette. On some occasions Măng insisted even haughtily on the observance towards himself of these rules by the princes who wished to see him, even though one of his own disciples plainly told him that in refusing to visit them because of their supposed failure to attend to such minutiæ he seemed to him to be "standing on a small point."[3] In fact

[1] Măng-tsze, b. 1, pt. ii. ch. x. p. 3. [2] Ibid., b. 3, pt. i. ch. iv.
[3] Ibid., b. 3, pt. ii. ch. i. p. 1.

the "rules of propriety" held in his estimation no less a place than in that of his Master and predecessor. It is gratifying, however, to find him admitting that cases may arise where their operation should be suspended. Indecorous as it is for males and females to "allow their hands to touch in giving or receiving anything," yet when "a man's sister-in-law" is drowning he is permitted, and indeed bound to, "rescue her with the hand." Nay, Măng in his liberality goes further, and emphatically observes, that "he who would not so rescue a drowning woman is a wolf."[1]

The most important doctrine of a moral character dwelt upon by Măng is that of the essential goodness of human nature, on which he lays considerable stress. According to him, "the tendency of man's nature to good is like the tendency of water to flow downwards," and it is shared by all, as all water flows downwards. You may indeed force water to go upwards by striking it, but the movement is unnatural, and it is equally contrary to the nature of man to be "made to do what is not good."[2] Yaou and Shun were indeed great men, but all may be Yaous and Shuns, if only they will make the necessary effort.[3] "*Men's* mouths agree in having the same relishes; their ears agree in enjoying the same sounds; their eyes agree in recognising the same beauty:—shall their minds alone be without that which they similarly approve? What is it then of which they similarly approve? It is, I say, the

[1] Măng-tsze, b. 4, pt. i. ch. xvii. p. 1.
[2] Ibid., b. 6, pt. i. ch. ii. pp. 2, 3.
[3] Ibid., b. 6, pt. ii. ch. ii. pp. 1-5.

principles *of our nature*, and the determinations of righteousness. The sages only apprehended before me that of which my mind approves along with other men. Therefore the principles of our nature and the determinations of righteousness are agreeable to my mind, just as the flesh of grass [?-fed] and grain-fed animals is agreeable to my mouth."[1] It ought not to be said that any man's mind is without benevolence and righteousness. But men lose their goodness as "the trees are denuded by axes and bills." The mind, "hewn down day after day," cannot "retain its beauty." But "the calm air of the morning" is favourable to the natural feelings of humanity, though they are destroyed again by the influences men come under during the day. "This fettering takes place again and again," and as "the restorative influence of the night" is insufficient to preserve the native hue, "the nature becomes not much different from that of the irrational animals," and then people suppose it never had these original powers of goodness. "But does this condition," continues Măng, "represent the feelings proper to humanity?"[2] What some of these feelings are he has plainly told us. Commiseration, shame, and dislike, modesty and complaisance, approbation and disapprobation, are according to him four principles which men have just as they have their four limbs. The important point for all men to attend to is their development, for if they are but completely developed, "they will suffice to love and protect all within the four seas."[3] And in another place he insists on the

[1] Măng-tsze, b. 6, pt. i. ch. vii. p. 8. [2] Ibid., b. 6, pt. i. ch. viii. p. 2.
[3] Ibid., b. 2, pt. i. ch. vi. pp. 5–7.

importance of studying and cultivating the nature which he asserts to be thus instinctively virtuous. "He who has exhausted all his mental constitution knows his nature. Knowing his nature, he knows Heaven.

"To preserve one's mental constitution, and nourish one's nature, is the way to serve Heaven."[1]

The moral tone of Măng's writings is exalted and unbending, and evinces a man whose character will bear comparison with those of the greatest philosophers or most eminent Christians of the western world.

Subdivision 5.—*The Shoo King.*

In this work are contained the historical memorials of the Chinese Empire. The authentic history of China extends, as is well known, to an earlier date than that of any extant nation. It possesses records of events that occurred more than 2000 years before the Christian era, although these events are intermixed with fabulous incidents. "From the time of T'ang the Successful, however," Dr Legge informs us, "commonly placed in the 18th century before Christ, we seem to be able to tread the field of history with a somewhat confident step."[2] The exact dates, however, cannot be fixed with certainty till the year 775 B.C. "Twenty centuries before our era the Chinese nation appears, beginning to be."[3]

Without entering into the history of the text of the Shoo King, it may be stated that its fifty-eight books may probably be accepted as "substantially the same

1 Măng-tsze, b. 7, pt. i. ch. i. pp. 1, 2. 2 C. C., vol. iii. Proleg., p. 48.
3 Ibid., p. 90.

with those which were known to Seun-tsze, Mencius, Mih-tsze, Confucius himself, and others."[1]

Its earliest books—which must be regarded as in great part legendary—contain accounts of three Chinese Emperors—Yaou, Shun, and Yu—whose conduct is held up as a model to future ages, and who represent the *beau idéal* of a ruler to the Chinese mind.

These admirable sovereigns were succeeded by men of very inferior virtue. T'ae-k'ang (B.C. 2187), the grandson of Yu, "pursued his pleasure and wanderings without any restraint." An insurrection against his authority took place, and his five brothers took occasion to admonish him by repeating "the cautions of the great Yu in the form of songs." The first of these songs may be quoted as a good specimen of the doctrine of the Shoo King with reference to the imperial duties:—

"It was the lesson of our great ancestor:—
The people should be cherished;
They should not be down-trodden:
The people are the root of a country;
The root firm, the country is tranquil.
When I look throughout the empire,
Of the simple men and simple women,
Any one may surpass me,
If I, the one man, err repeatedly:—
Should dissatisfaction be waited for till it appears?
Before it is seen, it should be guarded against.
In my relation to the millions of the people,
I should feel as much anxiety as if I were driving six horses with rotten reins.
The ruler of men—
How can he be but reverent *of his duty*?"[2]

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[1] C. C., vol. iii. Proleg., p. 48.

[2] Shoo King, b. 3, pt. iii. ch. i. pp. 6, 7.

Many successive dynasties, comprising sovereigns of very various characters, succeed these original Emperors. Throughout the Shoo King we find great stress laid on the doctrine, that the rulers of the land enjoy the protection of Heaven only so long as their government is good. Should the prince become tyrannical, dissolute, or neglectful of his exalted duties, the favour of the Divine Power is withdrawn from him and conferred upon another, who is thus enabled to drive him from the throne he is no longer worthy to fill. The emphatic and reiterated assertion of this revolutionary theory is very remarkable. Thus, a king who has himself just effected the overthrow of an incompetent dynasty, is represented as addressing this discourse to the "myriad regions:"—

"Ah! ye multitudes of the myriad regions, listen clearly to the announcement of me, the one man. The great God has conferred *even* on the inferior people a moral sense, compliance with which would show their nature invariably right.[1] *But* to cause them tranquilly to pursue the course which it would indicate, is the work of the sovereign.

"The king of Hea[2] extinguished his virtue and played the tyrant, extending his oppression over you, the people of the myriad regions. Suffering from his cruel injuries, and unable to endure the wormwood and poison, you protested with one accord your innocence to the spirits of heaven and earth. The way of Heaven is to bless the good and to punish the bad. It sent down calamities on *the House of* Hea, to make manifest its crimes.

[1] The same doctrine insisted on by Mǎng.

[2] The monarch whom the speaker had superseded.

"Therefore I, the little child, charged with the decree of Heaven and its bright terrors, did not dare to forgive *the criminal.* I presumed to use a dark-coloured victim, and making clear announcement to the spiritual Sovereign of the high heavens, requested leave to deal with the ruler of Hea as a criminal. Then I sought for the great sage, with whom I might unite my strength, to request the favour of Heaven on behalf of you, my multitudes. High Heaven truly showed its favour to the inferior people, and the criminal has been degraded and subjected."[1]

It is true that this speech, proceeding from an interested party naturally anxious to set his own conduct in the fairest light, is liable to suspicion. But there is abundant evidence in the pages of the Shoo King that the views expressed above were participated in by its writers, who constantly hold the fate that befalls wicked Emperors as a punishment from Heaven, and laud those who effect their downfall as Heaven's agents. They also frequently introduce sage advisers who reprove the reigning Emperor for his faults, and admonish him to walk in the ways of virtue in a spirit of the utmost frankness. One of these monarchs candidly confesses the benefit he has derived from the instructions of such a counsellor, whose lessons have led him to effect a complete reformation of his character.[2] Another charged his minister to be constantly presenting instructions to aid his virtue, and to act towards him as medicine which should cure his sickness.[3] If, however, a dynasty persisted in its evil courses, in spite of all the warn-

[1] Shoo King, iv. 3. 2. [2] Ibid., iv. 5. pt. ii.
[3] Ibid., iv. 8. pt. i. 5–8.

ings it might receive, it was doomed to perish. Losing the attachment of the people, it fell undefended and unregretted. Such was the case with the House of Yin. The Viscount of Wei, who is stated by old authorities to have been a brother of the Emperor, thus described its career :—

"The Viscount of Wei spoke to the following effect :—'Grand Tutor and Junior Tutor, *the House of* Yin, we may conclude, can no longer exercise rule over the four quarters of the empire. The great deeds of our founder were displayed in former ages, but by our being lost and maddened with wine, we have destroyed *the effects of* his virtue, in these after times. The people of Yin, small and great, are given to highway robberies, villanies, and treachery. The nobles and officers imitate one another in violating the laws; and for criminals there is no certainty that they will be apprehended. The lesser people *consequently* rise up, and make violent outrages on one another. The dynasty of Yin is now sinking in ruin;—its condition is like that of one crossing a large stream, who can find neither ford nor bank. That Yin should be hurrying to ruin at the present pace!'—

"He added, 'Grand Tutor and Junior Tutor, we are manifesting insanity. The venerable of our families have withdrawn to the wilds; and now you indicate nothing, but tell me of the impending ruin;—what is to be done?'

"The Grand Tutor made about the following reply :—'King's son, Heaven in anger is sending down calamities, and wasting the country of Yin.'" And after mentioning the crimes of the Emperor,

he proceeds:—" 'When ruin overtakes Shang, I will not be the servant *of another dynasty. But* I tell you, O king's son, to go away as being the course *for you.* . . . Let us rest quietly in our several parts, and present ourselves to the former kings. I do not think of making my escape.'" [1]

In another portion of the Shoo the causes which lead to the preservation or loss of Heaven's favour are thus described by "The Duke of Chow:"—"The favour of Heaven is not easily preserved. Heaven is hard to be depended on. Men lose its favouring appointment because they cannot pursue and carry out the reverence and brilliant virtue of their forefathers." Again:—"Heaven is not to be trusted. Our course is simply to seek the prolongation of the virtue of the Tranquillising king, and Heaven will not find occasion to remove its favouring decree which King Wan received." [2]

The paramount importance to the national welfare of a wise selection of ministers and officials receives its full share of attention in the Chinese Bible. The Duke of Ts'in, another province of the Empire, is represented as speaking thus:—

"I have deeply thought and concluded;—Let me have but one resolute minister, plain and sincere, without other abilities, but having a simple, complacent mind, and possessed of generosity, regarding the talents of others, as if he himself possessed them: and when he finds accomplished and sage-like men, loving them in his heart more than his mouth expresses, really showing himself able to bear them:—such a minister would be able to preserve my descendants

[1] Shoo King, iv. 11. [2] Ibid., v. 16. 1.

and my people, and would indeed be a giver of benefits.'[1]

These extracts, without giving an adequate notion of the very miscellaneous contents of the Shoo King, a work which could not be accomplished without an undue extension of the subdivision referring to it, will serve to show that its moral tone on matters relating to the government of a nation is not inferior to that of any of the productions of classical or Hebrew antiquity.

SUBDIVISION 6.—*The She King.*

Whatever sanctity or authority may attach to the She King in the minds of the Chinese, must belong to it solely on account of its antiquity, for there is certainly nothing in the character of its contents that should entitle it to a place in the consecrated literature of a nation. Similar phenomena, however, are not unknown among more devout races than the Chinese. Thus the Hebrews admitted into their Canon the Books of Ruth and Esther, and the Song of Solomon, which contain but little of an edifying nature, though full of human interest. The same may be said of the She King. The play of human emotions is vividly represented in it, but there is not much in which moral or religious lessons are to be found, except by doing violence to the text.

The She King is a collection of ancient poems. Tradition attributes the arrangement and selection of the Odes now contained in it to Confucius, who is supposed to have selected them in accordance with

[1] Shoo King, v. 30. See also v. 19. 2.

some wise design from a much larger number. The present translator, however, assigns reasons for rejecting this tradition, and for believing that the She King was current in China long before his time in a form not very different from that in which we now possess it. At the present day, its songs have not lost their ancient popularity, for it is stated that they are "the favourite study of the better informed at the present remote period. Every well-educated Chinese has the most celebrated pieces by heart, and there are constant allusions to them in modern poetry and writings of all kinds."[1]

The poems, which were collected from many different provinces, relate to a great variety of subjects. Some are political, some domestic; some sacrificial, others festive. We have rulers addressing the princes of their kingdom in laudatory terms, and princes in their turn extolling the ruler; complaints of unemployed politicians, and groans from oppressed subjects; husbands deploring their absence from their wives on military service; forlorn wives longing for the return of absent husbands; stanzas written by lovers to their mistresses, and maidens' invocations of their lovers; along with a few allusions to amatory transactions of a more questionable character. All these miscellaneous matters are treated in short, simple, and rather monotonous poems, which, if they have any beauty in the original, have completely lost it in the process of translation. There is sometimes pathos in the feelings uttered; but the expressions are of the most direct and unornamental kind, and the whole book partakes largely of that artlessness which we have noted as one of the ordinary marks of Sacred Books.

[1] Davis' Chinese, ii. 60.

A few specimens will suffice. Here is the "protest of a widow against being urged to marry again:"—

1. "It floats about, that boat of cypress wood,
There in the middle of the Ho.
With his two tufts of hair falling over his forehead;
He was my mate;
And I swear that till death I will have no other.
O mother, O Heaven,
Why will you not understand me?

2. "It floats about, that boat of cypress wood,
There by the side of the Ho.
With his two tufts of hair falling over his forehead;
He was my only one;
And I swear that till death I will not do the evil thing.
O mother, O Heaven,
Why will you not understand me?"[1]

In the following lines a young lady begs her lover to be more cautious in his advances, and that in a tone which may remind us of Nausikaa's request to Odysseus to walk at some distance behind her, lest the busybodies of the town should take occasion to gossip:—

1. "I pray you, Mr Chung,
Do not come leaping into my hamlet;
Do not break my willow-trees.
Do I care for them?
But I fear my parents.
You, O Chung, are to be loved,
But the words of my parents
Are also to be feared.

2. "I pray you, Mr Chung,
Do not come leaping over my wall;
Do not break my mulberry-trees.
Do I care for them?
But I fear the words of my brothers.
You, O Chung, are to be loved,
But the words of my brothers
Are also to be feared.

[1] She King, i. 4. 1.

3. "I pray you, Mr Chung,
Do not come leaping into my garden;
Do not break my sandal-trees.
Do I care for them?
But I dread the talk of people.
You, O Chung, are to be loved,
But the talk of people
Is also to be feared."[1]

The following Ode, conceived in a different spirit, will serve to illustrate one of the most prominent features of Chinese character as depicted in these ancient books,—its filial piety. It is supposed to be the composition of a young monarch who has just succeeded to the government of his kingdom:—

"Alas for me, who am [as] a little child.
On whom has devolved the unsettled State!
Solitary am I and full of distress.
Oh my great Father,
All thy life long, thou wast filial.

"Thou didst think of my great grandfather,
[Seeing him, as it were] ascending and descending in the court.
I, the little child,[2]
Day and night will be so reverent.

"Oh ye great kings,
As your successor, I will strive not to forget you."[3]

SUBDIVISION 7.—*The Ch'un Ts'ëw.*

According to Chinese tradition, the Ch'un Ts'ëw, or Spring and Autumn, was the production of Confucius himself; not indeed his original composition, but a compilation made by him from

[1] She King, i. 7. 2.

[2] Not literally a child. "Little child" is the usual style of Chinese rulers when designing to express feelings of modesty and religious reverence.

[3] She King, iv. 1. [iii.] 1.

pre-existing sources. The title of Ch'un Ts'ëw was not of his own making. It was the name already in use for the annals of the several States. The annals were arranged under the four seasons of each year, and then two of the seasons—Spring and Autumn—were used as an abbreviated term for all the four. And so strictly is this principle of parcelling out the annals of each year under the several seasons adhered to in the work, that even when there is no event to be recorded we have such entries as these: "It was summer, the fourth month." "It was winter, the tenth month."

The classical Ch'un Ts'ëw was compiled from the Ch'un Ts'ëw of the State of Loo. It is even doubtful whether Confucius did anything more than copy what he found in the annals of that country. Dr Legge evidently inclines to the belief that he altered nothing. At any rate, the work can only be regarded as very partially his own. More than this, it is questionable whether the text we have at present is that of the original Ch'un Ts'ëw at all. This classic is indeed said to have been recovered in the Han dynasty after the destruction of the books. But there are circumstances which may well make us hesitate before we accept the Chinese account of this recovery as a fact. Măng, who had the best opportunities of knowing what his master was believed to have written, if not what he actually had written, speaks of the Ch'un Ts'ëw in terms wholly inapplicable to the work before us. He asserts expressly that it was composed by him because right principles had dwindled away, because unseemly language and unrighteous deeds were

common, and he attributes to its completion the result that "rebellious ministers and villanous sons were struck with terror." Now we may allow what limits we please for the exaggeration natural to a disciple when speaking of the labours of a revered master. But can we believe that Măng, a man whose own teaching proves him to have been a moderate and sensible thinker, would have spoken thus of a compilation which from beginning to end contains absolutely no moral principles whatever? Yet such is the case with the "Spring and Autumn" as we possess it. There is not in it the faintest glimmer of an ethical judgment on the historical events which it records. A birth, an eclipse, a fall of snow, a plague of insects, a murder, a battle, the death of a ruler, are all chronicled in the same dry, lifeless, unvarying style. Nowhere would it be possible for an unprejudiced critic to detect the opinions of the compiler, or to gather from his words that he viewed a virtuous action with more favour than an abominable crime. Such being the case, I hesitate, notwithstanding the high authority of Dr Legge, to accept the genuineness of this work as beyond cavil.

It has in fact been questioned in China, not indeed on very valid grounds, by a scholar whose letter he has translated in his Prolegomena, and he himself candidly acknowledges the extreme difficulty of reconciling the character of our present text with the statement of Măng. But he considers the external testimony to the recovery of the book sufficiently weighty to dispose of this and other difficulties. Yet, without disputing the strength of

the grounds on which this conclusion rests, we may still permit ourselves to entertain a modest doubt whether this compilation was really the handiwork of such a man as we know Confucius to have been, and that doubt will be strengthened when we recall the common tendency of the popular mind to connect the authorship of standard works with names of high repute. And the bare existence of such a doubt will compel us to suspend our judgment on the very serious charges of misrepresentation and falsehood which Dr Legge has brought against Confucius in his capacity of historian. If the actual Ch'un Ts'ëw be shown to be identical with that edited by Confucius, and if he simply adopted, without alteration, or with very trivial alteration, the labours of his predecessors, the gravity of these charges will be very considerably diminished. For we know not but what some feeling of respect for that which he found already recorded may have stayed his hand from revision and improvement.

Passing to the work itself, we shall find little in it worthy of attention, unless by those who may be desirous of studying the history of China. Chinese commentators have indeed discovered all kinds of recondite meanings in it, as is usually the case with the commentators on Sacred Books, but these are of no more value than the similar discoveries of types and mystic foreshadowings in the Hebrew Scriptures. In itself, the text is profoundly uninteresting. Here is one of the shortest chapters as a specimen. The title of the Book from which it is taken is "Duke Chwang:"—

XXVI: 1. "In his twenty-sixth year, in spring, the duke invaded the Jung.

2. "In summer, the duke arrived from the invasion of the Jung.

3. "Ts'aou put to death one of its great officers.

4. "In autumn, the duke joined an officer of Sung and an officer of Ts'e in invading Seu.

5. "In winter, in the twelfth month, on Kwei-hae, the first day of the moon, the sun was eclipsed."[1]

The events noted in these annals refer to various States—for it appears that the several States were in the habit of communicating remarkable occurrences to each other—but they are of a very limited class, and are invariably recorded in the brief manner of the chapter that has just been quoted. Eclipses of the sun are duly registered, and the record thus acquires a chronological value of high importance in historical researches. Among the other facts commonly mentioned are sacrifices for rain, which occur very frequently; wars, with the results of great battles; the marriages or deaths of rulers and important persons; their journeys; occasionally their murder; meetings of rulers for the purpose of common action in matters of State; diplomatic missions, invasions of locusts or other troublesome insects; and lastly, peculiarities of various kinds in the state of the weather. It is plain that annals of this kind have no religious significance beyond that which they derive from the mere fact of being reputed sacred. And in this aspect the Ch'un Ts'ëw is certainly curious. Having been assigned—rightly or wrongly—to the pen of the prophet of

[1] Ch'un Ts'ëw, iii. 26.

China, it seems to have become a point of honour with Chinese scholars to extract from it, by hook or by crook, the profoundest lessons on politics and morals.

Section II.—The Taò-tĕ-Kīng.[1]

There are in China three recognised sects or "religiones licitæ:"—Confucianism, Buddhism, and Tao-ism. We have examined the Sacred Books of the first; those of the second will come under review in another section. There remains the comparatively small and unimportant sect of the Taò-ssé, or "Doctors of Reason," who derive their origin from Laò-tsè, and who possess as their classic the single written composition which emanated from their founder.[2] It is entitled the Taò-tĕ-Kīng.

[1] By far the best European work on the Taò-tĕ-Kīng is that of Victor von Strauss, and I have followed his translation, though not without consulting those of others. I am fully sensible of the inconvenience of a double translation, and I should have preferred to follow Chalmers' English rendering of Laò-tsè, had not the obscurity of his version been so great as to render it almost unintelligible to the general reader. Reinhold von Plänckner's translation errs on the other side by excess of clearness. It is a palpable attempt to force upon the ancient Chinaman a connected system professedly unravelled from the text by the ingenuity of the modern German. It should be used only with extreme caution, or not at all.

[2] It deserves to be noted, as a peculiarity of the Chinese prophets—Confucius and Laò-tsè—that they alone among their peers have left authentic written compositions. The Koran can scarcely be said to have been written by Mahomet, in the sense in which we talk of writing a book. And neither Zarathustra, Jesus, nor the Buddha, were authors. The calmer Chinese temperament permitted, in the case of these two great teachers, a mode of conveying instruction which is repugnant, as a rule, to the fervid prophetic nature. Observe that of the Jewish (so-called) prophets, those who committed their prophecies to writing, generally belonged to a comparatively late age, in which oral prophecy was no longer in vogue, and the state of feeling that had inspired it no longer prevalent.

Ancient as this book is (probably about B.C. 520), there is no reason to doubt its authenticity. This is sufficiently guaranteed by quotations from it which are found in authors belonging to the fourth century B.C., and by the fact that a scholar who wrote in B.C. 163 made it the subject of a commentary, which accompanies it sentence by sentence. Nor does Chinese tradition state that it perished in the Burning of the Books (B.C. 212–209), which was a measure levelled against the Confucian school, and took place under an Emperor who was favourable to the Taò-ssé. We may safely conclude that we are in possession of the genuine composition of the ancient philosopher.[1]

Of the three words which compose its title, Kīng has already been explained.[2] The full meaning of Taò will appear in the sequel: we may here term it the Absolute. Tĕ means Virtue; and the title would thus imply either that this Canonical Book deals with the Absolute *and* with Virtue, or with that kind of virtue which emanates from, and is founded upon, a belief in and a spiritual union with the Absolute.[3]

Whatever the signification of its name, its principal subjects undoubtedly are Taò and Tĕ: the Supreme Principle and human Virtue. Let us see what is Laò-tsè's description of Taò, the great fundamental Being on whom his whole system rests. "Taò, if it can be pronounced, is not the eternal Taò. The Name, if it can be named, is not the eternal Name. The Nameless One is the foundation of Heaven and Earth; he who has a Name is the Mother of all

[1] T. T. K., lxxiii., lxxiv. [2] Supra, p. 30.

[3] The former view is that of Stan. Julien; the latter that of von Plänckner.

beings."[1] These enigmatical sentences open the Taò philosophy. The idea that Taò is unnameable is a prominent one in the author's mind, although he seems also to recognise a subordinate creative principle—like the Gnostic Æons—which is nameable. Thus we read: "Taò, the Eternal, has no Name. . . . He who begins to create, has a Name."[2] Again: "For ever and ever it is unnameable, and returns into non-existence." Or: "I know not its Name; if I describe it, I call it Taò."[3] We are reminded of Faust's reply in Goethe:—

> "Ich habe keinen Namen
> Dafür! Gefühl ist alles;
> Name ist Schall und Rauch
> Umnebelnd Himmelsgluth."

Nor is Taò only without a Name; it is sometimes described as if devoid of all intelligible attributes. Thus, in one chapter, we learn that it is eternally without action, and yet without non-action.[4] Nay, the entire absence of all activity is not unfrequently predicated of Taò, whose great merit is stated to be complete quiescence. Taò is moreover incomprehensible, inconceivable, undiscoverable, obscure.[5] Its upper part is not clear, its lower part not obscure. It returns into non-existence. It is the form of the Formless; the image of the Imageless.[6] Mysterious as this Being is, yet in other places attributes are ascribed to it which go far to elucidate the author's conception of its nature. Productive energy, for instance, is plainly attributed to Taò, for it is stated that Taò produces one, one two, and two three, while

[1] Ch. 1. [3] Ch. 25. [5] Ch. 21.
[2] Ch. 32. [4] Ch. 37. [6] Ch. 14.

three produce all creatures.[1] The following account is less mystical: "Taò produces them [creatures], its Might preserves them, its essence forms them, its power perfects them: therefore of all beings there is none that does not adore Taò, and honour its Might. The adoration of Taò, the honouring of its Might, is commanded by no one and is always spontaneous. For Taò produces them, preserves them, brings them up, fashions them, perfects them, ripens them, cherishes them, protects them. To produce and not possess, to act and not expect, to bring up and not control, this is called sublime Virtue."[2] In addition to these creative and preservative qualities, it has moral attributes of the highest order. Thus, its Spirit is supremely trustworthy. In it is faithfulness.[3] All beings trust to it in order to live. When a work is completed, it does not call it its own. Loving and nourishing all beings, it still does not lord it over them. It is eternally without desire. All beings turn to it, yet it does not lord it over them.[4] It is eminently straightforward. It dwells only with those who are not occupied with the luxuries of this world.[5] Nay, it is altogether perfect.[6] The last assertion is found in a chapter which, as it is probably the most important in the book for the purpose of understanding the theology of the author, deserves to be translated in full:—"There existed a Being, inconceivably perfect, before Heaven and Earth arose. So still! so supersensible! It alone remains and does not change. It pervades all and is not endangered.

[1] Ch., 42.
[2] Ch., 51. I have borrowed some expressions from Chalmers, O. P.
[3] Ch., 21. [4] Ch., 34. [5] Ch., 53. [6] Ch., 25.

It may be regarded as the Mother of the World. I know not its name; if I describe it, I call it Taò. Concerned to give it a Name, I call it Great; as great, I call it Immense; as immense, I call it Distant; as distant, I call it Returning. For Taò is great; Heaven is great; the Earth is great; the King is also great. In the world there are many kinds of greatness, and the King remains one of them. The measure of Man is the earth; the measure of earth, Heaven; the measure of Heaven, Taò; Taò's measure itself."[1]

Such is the picture of Taò; but the Taò-tĕ-kīng is much more than a treatise on theology; it is even more conspicuously a treatise on morals. Taò is indeed the transcendental foundation on which the ethical superstructure is raised; but the superstructure occupies a much more considerable space than the foundation, and seems to have been the main practical end for which the latter was laid down. Intermingled with the image of Taò we find the image of the good man, or, as we may call him, in Scriptural phraseology, the righteous man; an ideal of perfect virtue, whom the author holds up, not as an actual person, but as an imaginary model for the guidance of human conduct. By putting together the scattered traits of his character, we may arrive at a tolerable comprehension of the author's conception of perfect goodness. In the first place, the righteous man is in harmony in his actions with Taò; he becomes one with Taò, and Taò rejoices to receive him.[2] He places himself in the

[1] Ch., 25. For the sake of enabling the reader to compare the interpretations of this important chapter given by various Sinologues, I subjoin in an appendix four other translations.

[2] Ch., 23.

background, and by that very means is brought forward.[1] He does not regard himself, and therefore shines; he is not just to himself, and is therefore distinguished; does not praise himself, and is therefore meritorious; does not exalt himself, and is therefore pre-eminent. As he does not dispute, none can dispute with him.[2] If he acts, he sets no store by his action; for he does not wish to render his wisdom conspicuous.[3] He knows himself, but does not regard himself; loves himself, but does not set a high price on himself.[4] Unwilling lightly to promise great things, he is thereby able to accomplish the more; by treating things as difficult, he finds nothing too difficult during his whole life.[5] Inaccessible alike to friendship and enmity, uninfluenced by personal advantage or injury, by honour or dishonour, he is honoured by all the world.[6] He is characterised by quiet earnestness; should he possess splendid palaces, he inhabits them or quits them with equal calm.[7] He clothes himself in wool (a very coarse material in China), and hides his jewels.[8] He is ever ready to help others; for the good man is the educator of the bad, the bad man the treasure of the good.[9] "The righteous man does not accumulate. The more he spends on others, the more he has; the more he gives to others, the richer he is."[10] "He who knows others is clever; he who knows himself is enlightened."[11] Thus the sage, like Socrates, makes γνῶθι σέαυτον a main principle of his conduct. Should he be called to the administration of the realm, he adopts a policy of *laisser faire*, for

[1] Ch., 7.
[2] Ch., 22.
[3] Ch., 77.
[4] Ch., 72.
[5] Ch., 63.
[6] Ch., 56.
[7] Ch., 26.
[8] Ch., 70.
[9] Ch., 27.
[10] Ch., 81.
[11] Ch., 33.

he has observed the evils produced by over-legislation. It is his belief that if he be inactive, the people will improve by themselves; if he be quiet, they will become honourable; if he abstain from intermeddling, they will become rich; if he be free from desires, they will become simple.[1] Compelled to engage in war, he will not make use of conquest to triumph or exalt himself, neither will he take violent measures.[2] Mercy is a quality that must not be despised; the merciful will conquer in battle.[3] Endowed with these characteristics, the good man need fear nothing. Like Horace's

"Integer vitæ scelerisque purus,"

he is preserved from danger. The horn of the rhinoceros, the claws of the tiger, the blade of the sword, cannot hurt him.[4] He is like a new-born child: serpents do not sting it, nor wild beasts seize it, nor birds of prey attack it.[5]

A few features, which do not directly enter into the delineation of the character of the sage, must still be added to complete that image. And first, a prominent place must be assigned to a quality which is a large ingredient in Laò-tsé's conception of goodness, both human and divine. It is that of gentleness, or, as he would call it, weakness. It is a favourite principle of his that the weak things of the earth overcome the strong, and that they overcome in virtue of that very weakness. He has an aversion to all conspicuous exercise of force. The deity of his philosophy is one who is indeed all-powerful, but who never displays

[1] Ch., 57. [2] Ch., 30. [3] Ch., 67. [4] Ch., 50.

[5] Ch., 55. Von Strauss explains this to mean that he is like the child in its unconsciousness of danger from these sources.

his power. The method of Heaven—and it should also be that of man—is *apparent* yielding, leading to real supremacy. "It strives not, yet is able to overcome. It speaks not, yet is able to obtain an answer. It summons not, yet men come to it of their own accord; is long-suffering, yet is able to succeed in its designs."[1] The superiority of the weak—or the seeming weak—to the strong, is further illustrated by Laò-tsé in several parallels. We enter life soft and feeble; we quit it hard and strong. Therefore softness and feebleness are the companions of life; hardness and strength of death.[2] And does not the wife overcome her husband by her quietness?[3] Is not water the softest and weakest of all things in the world, yet is there anything which ever attacks the hard and strong that is able to surpass it?[4] Thus, the most yielding of all substances overcomes the most inflexible. Hence is manifest the advantage of inactivity and of silence.[5] It is fully in accordance with these notions that Laò-tsé should distinctly deprecate warfare, and should assert that the most competent general will not be warlike. Calmly conscious of his power, he is not quarrelsome or eager for battle, and thus possessing the virtue of peaceable and patient strength, he becomes the peer of Heaven.[6] War is altogether to be condemned, as pregnant with calamity to the state.[7] "The most beauteous weapons are instruments of misfortune; all creatures abhor them; therefore he who has Taò does not employ them." They are not the instruments of the wise man. If he must needs

[1] Ch., 73.
[2] Ch., 76.
[3] Ch., 61.
[4] Ch., 78.
[5] Ch., 43.
[6] Ch., 68.
[7] Ch., 30.

resort to them, yet he still values peace and quietness as the highest aims. He conquers with reluctance. "He who has killed many men, let him weep for them with grief and compassion. He who has conquered in battle, let him stand as at a funeral pomp."[1]

Another striking characteristic of Laò-tsé's moral system is his dislike of luxury, and his earnest injunction to all men to be contented with modest circumstances. We have seen that the sage is depicted as wearing coarse clothing, and Laò-tsé considers that the very presence of considerable riches indicates the absence of Taò from the minds of their possessors. As we should express it, the devotion to worldly wealth is inconsistent with a spiritual life. "To wear fine clothes, to carry sharp swords, to be filled with drink and victuals, to have a superfluity of costly gems, this is to make a parade of robbery;[2] truly not to have Taò."[3] Moreover, the very pomp of the palace leads to uncultivated fields and empty barns.[4] Laò-tsé therefore warns every one not to consider his abode too narrow or his life too confined. If we do not think it too confined, it will not be so.[5] Nay, he goes further, and asserts that the world is best known by staying at home. The further a man goes, the less he knows.[6] A truly virtuous and well-governed people will never care to travel beyond its own limits. To such a people its food will be so sweet, its clothing so beautiful, its dwellings so comfortable, and its customs so dear, that it will never visit the territory of its neighbours, even though

[1] Ch., 31.
[2] Or, this is "magnificent robbery," O. P., p. 41.
[3] Ch., 53.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Ch., 72.
[6] Ch., 47.

that territory should lie so close that the cackling of the hens and the barking of the dogs may be heard across the boundary.[1]

It results from the above exposition of his ethical principles that Laò-tsé insists mainly upon three virtues: Modesty, Benevolence, and Contentment. "For my part," he says himself, "I have three treasures; I guard them and greatly prize them. The first is called Mercy,[2] the second is called Frugality, the third is called Not daring to be first in the kingdom. Mercy—therefore I can be brave; Frugality—therefore I can give away; Not daring to be first in the kingdom—therefore I can become the first of the gifted ones."[3]

Of all sacred books, the Taò-tĕ-kīng is the most philosophical. It stands, indeed, on the borderland between a revelation and a system of philosophy, partaking to some extent of the nature of both. Since, however, it forms the fundamental classic of a religious sect, and since it has engaged in its interpretation a multitude of commentators,[4] it appears to be fully entitled to a place among Scriptures. Not indeed that the Chinese regard it as a revelation in the same sense in which nations of a more theological cast of mind apply that term to the books composing their

[1] Ch., 80.

[2] Or Compassionateness. Chalmers translates "compassion," but this term denotes the sentiment rather than the virtue.

[3] Ch., 67.

[4] See their names in Le Livre de la Voie et de la Vertu (hereafter abbreviated thus—L. V. V.). Composé dans le VIe Siècle avant l'ère chrétienne par le Philosophe Lao-Tseu. Traduit en Français et publié avec le texte chinois par Stanislas Julien. 8vo. Paris, 1872. P. xxxvi.

Canon. But I see no reason to doubt that the Tao-sse, however little they attend to its precepts, yet treat it as a work of unapproachable perfection and unquestionable truth. Indeed, the writer of a fabulous life of Laò-tsé, who lived many centuries after his death, expressly ascribes to it those peculiar qualities which, as we have seen, are the special attributes of sacred books.[1]

To the European reader who approaches it for the first time it will probably appear a perplexing study. Participating largely in that disorder and confusedness which characterises the class of literature to which it belongs, it presents, in addition, considerable difficulties peculiarly its own. The correct translation of many passages is doubtful. The sense of still more is ambiguous and obscure. Laò-tsé is fond of paradox, and his constant employment of paradoxical antitheses seems specially designed to puzzle the reader. If his doctrine was understood by few, it must be confessed that this was partly his own fault. Moreover, the reverence with which he speaks of Taò, and the care with which he insists that Taò does nothing, seem at first sight inconsistent. We feel ourselves in an atmosphere of hopeless mysticism. Nevertheless, these superficial troubles vanish, or at least retire into the background, after repeated perusals of the work. There are few books that gain more on continued acquaintance. Every successive study reveals more and more of a wisdom and a beauty which we miss at first in the obscurity and strangeness of the style.

And first, Taò itself turns out to be a less incomprehensible and contradictory being than we originally

[1] L. V. V., pp. xxxi., xxxii.

supposed. For although he may sometimes be spoken of as doing nothing, or even as destitute of all distinct qualities, yet other attributes expressly exclude the notion of absolute inaction. A being which creates, cherishes, and loves, and in which all the world implicitly trusts, is not the kind of nonentity that can be described as wholly devoid of "action, thought, judgment, and intelligence."[1] Moreover, it is to be borne in mind that the sage is to imitate Taò in the quality—for which he is highly lauded—of doing nothing. The two pictures, that of Taò and his follower, must be held side by side in order to be correctly understood. Now what is the peculiar beauty, from a philosophical point of view, of the order of Nature? It is that all its parts harmoniously perform their several offices, without any violent or conspicuous intrusion of the presiding principle which guides them all.

Other teachers, indeed, have seen God mainly in violent and convulsive manifestations, and have appealed to miraculous suspensions of natural order as the best proofs of his existence. Not so Laò-tsé. He sees him in the quiet, unobtrusive, unapparent guidance of the world; in the unseen, yet irresistible power to which mankind unresistingly submit, precisely because it is never thrust offensively upon them. The Deity of Laò-tsé is free from those gross and unlovely elements which degrade his character in so many other religions. He rules by gentleness and love, not

[1] Such is the description of M. Julien, derived from the most ancient Chinese commentators. I am at a loss to reconcile it even with his own translation, though it would be presumptuous in me to deny that the learned Sinologue may have reasons for it of which I am not aware.—See L. V. V., p. xiii.

by vindictiveness and anger. So should it be with the holy man who takes him for his model. Assuredly we are not to understand those passages which enjoin quiescence so earnestly upon him as meaning that he is to lead a life of absolute indolence. Like Taó, he is to guide his fellow-creatures rather by the beauty of his conduct than by positive commands laid imperatively upon them. Let him but be a shining example; they will be drawn towards him. The activity from which a wise ruler is to abstain is the vexatious multiplication of laws and edicts, which do harm rather than good. But neither ruler nor philosopher is told to do nothing; for benevolence, love, and the requital of good for evil, to say nothing of other positive virtues, are most strictly enjoined on all. Laò-tsé himself no doubt lived, and loved, a retired, contemplative life. This is the kind of existence which he evidently considered the most perfect and the most godlike. He counsels his followers to be wholly unambitious, and to abstain from all active pursuit of political honours. Such counsel might possibly be well adapted to the time in which he lived. But none the less does he lay down rules for the guidance of kings, statesmen, and warriors, in their several spheres. Nor is the book wanting in pithy apophthegms applicable to all, and remarkable alike for the wisdom of their substance and the neatness of their form. Whether, in short, we look to the simplicity and grandeur of its speculative doctrine, or to the unimpeachable excellence of its moral teaching, we shall find few among the great productions of the human mind that evince, from beginning to end, so lofty a spirit and so pure a strain.

APPENDIX TO SECTION II.

Translations of the Taò-tè-Kīng, ch. 25.

ABEL RÉMUSAT.—" Avant le chaos qui a précédé la naissance du ciel et de la terre, un seul être existait, immense et silencieux, immuable et toujours agissant sans jamais s'altérer. On peut le regarder comme la *mère* de l'univers. J'ignore son nom, mais je le désigne par le mot de *raison.*

Forcé de lui donner un nom, je l'appelle *grandeur, progression, éloignement, opposition.* Il y a dans le monde quatre grandeurs : celle de la raison, celle du ciel, celle de la terre, celle du roi, qui est aussi une des quatre. L'homme a son type et son modèle dans la terre, la terre dans le ciel, le ciel dans la raison, la raison en elle-même." [1]

STANISLAS JULIEN.—"Il est un être confus qui existait avant le ciel et la terre.

O qu'il est calme ! O qu'il est immatériel !

Il subsiste seul et ne change point.

Il circule partout et ne périclite point.

Il peut être regardé comme la mère de l'univers.

Moi, je ne sais pas son nom.

Pour lui donner un titre, je l'appelle *Voie* (Tao).

En m'efforçant de lui faire un nom, je l'appelle *grand.*

De *grand*, je l'appelle *fugace.*

De *fugace*, je l'appelle *éloigné.*

D'*éloigné*, je l'appelle (l'être) *qui revient.*

C'est pourquoi le Tao est *grand*, le ciel est *grand*, la terre est *grande*, le roi aussi est *grand.*

Dans le monde, il y a quatre grandes choses, et le roi en est une.

L'homme imite la terre ; la terre imite le ciel ; le ciel imite le Tao ; le Tao imite sa nature." [2]

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[1] Mémoire sur la Vie et les Opinions de Lao-tseu, par M. Abel Rémusat Paris, 1823, p. 27.

[2] L. V. V., p. 35.

JOHN CHALMERS.—"There was something chaotic in nature which existed before heaven and earth. It was still. It was void. It stood alone and was not changed. It pervaded everywhere and was not endangered. It may be regarded as the Mother of the Universe. I know not its name, but give it the title of Tau. If I am forced to make a name for it, I say it is *Great;* being great, I say that it *passes away;* passing away, I say that it is *far off;* being far off, I say that it *returns.*

Now Tau is great; Heaven is great; Earth is great; a king is great. In the universe there are four greatnesses, and a king is one of them. Man takes his law from the Earth; the Earth takes its law from Heaven; Heaven takes its law from Tau; and Tau takes its law from what is in itself." [1]

REINHOLD VON PLÄNCKNER.—"Es existirt ein das All erfüllendes, durchaus vollkommenes Wesen, das früher war denn der Himmel und die Erde. Es existirt da in erhabener Stille, es ist ewig und unveränderlich, und ohne Anstoss dringt es überall hin, überall da.

Man möchte es als den Schöpfer der Welt ansehen. Seinen Namen weiss ich nicht, ich nenne es am liebsten das Tao; soll ich diesem eine bezeichnende Eigenschaft beilegen, so würde es die der höchsten Erhabenheit sein.

Ja, erhaben ist das Wesen, um das sich das All und Alles im All bewegt, als solches muss es ewig sein, und wie es ewig ist, ist es folglich auch allgegenwärtig.

Ja das Tao ist erhaben, erhaben ist auch der Himmel, erhaben die Erde, erhaben ist auch das Ideal des Menschen. So sind denn vier erhabene Wesen im Universum, und das Ideal des Menschen ist ohne Zweifel eins derselben.

Denn der Mensch stammt von der Erde, die Erde stammt vom Himmel, der Himmel stammt vom Tao.—Und das Tao stammt ohne Frage allein aus sich selbst." [2]

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[1] O. P., p. 18. [2] L. T., p. 113.

Section III.—The Veda.[1]

The word *Veda* is explained by Sanskrit scholars as meaning *knowing* or *knowledge*, and as being related to the Greek οἶδα. The works comprised under this designation are manifold, and appertain to widely different epochs. In the first place they fall into two main classes, the *Sanhitâ* and the *Brâhmana*. The Sanhitâ portion of the Veda consists of hymns or metrical compositions addressed to the several deities worshipped by their authors, and expressing religious sentiment; the Brâhmana portion, of theological treatises in prose of an expository, ritualistic, and didactic character. Across this subdivision into two classes there runs another of the whole Veda into four

[1] The literature of the Veda is now copious. To mention only a few works, H. H. Wilson published a translation of the first five Ashtakas of the Rig-Veda-Sanhitâ, but I have forborne to make use of it, from a conviction that the advance of Vedic scholarship has to a great degree, if not wholly, superseded the methods of interpretation employed by him. Benfey has translated the whole of the Sâma-Veda-Sanhitâ into German, and I have studied his translation, but have preferred to rely mainly on the labours of English scholars, both because the inherent obscurity of these ancient hymns might be increased by the process of re-translation, and also because I might possibly fail to catch the exact shades of meaning of the German words. His work should, however, be consulted by those who desire to acquaint themselves with the style of the Veda. Max Müller has unhappily published but one volume of his translation of the Rig-Veda-Sanhitâ, which is doubtless destined (if completed) to become the standard English version of that portion of the text. The same eminent scholar has translated many of the hymns in his "Ancient Sanskrit Literature." Another source from which I have derived valuable assistance is Dr Muir's laborious work entitled "Original Sanskrit Texts." Such are the principal authorities on the hymns. Of the Brâhmanas, the whole of the Aitareya Brâhmana has been translated by Haug, and portions of others by Roer and by Rajendralâl Mitra.

so-called Vedas, the Rig-Veda, the Yajur-Veda, the Sâma-Veda, and the Atharva-Veda. Each of these has its own Sanhitâs, and its own Brâhmanas; but the Sanhitâ, or hymns, of the three other Vedas are not materially different from those of the Rig-Veda. On the Rig-Veda they are all founded; this is the fundamental Veda, or great Veda; and in knowing this one we should know all. The other three, according to Max Müller, contain "chiefly extracts from the Rig-Veda, together with sacrificial formulas, charms, and incantations."[1] It must not therefore be imagined that we have in these four Vedas four different collections of hymns. They are rather four different versions of the same collection, the Sâma-Veda, for instance, containing but seventy-one verses which are wanting in the Rig-Veda,[2] and being otherwise "little more than a repetition of the Soma Mandala of the Rich,"[3] or of that book of the Rig-Veda which is devoted to the god Soma. The Atharva-Veda-Sanhitâ is indeed to a certain extent an exception; belonging to a later age, it has some hymns altogether peculiar to itself, and its 15th book "has something of the nature of a Brâhmana."[4] It must be noted, moreover, that of the Yajur-Veda there are two different versions, the Black and the White Yajur-Veda, said to have descended from two rival schools. The hymns of the first are termed the Taittirîya-Sanhitâ, those of the second the Vâjasaneyi-Sanhitâ.

The origin of these four distinct, yet not different Vedas, is thus explained. In certain sacrifices, formerly celebrated in India, four classes of priests

[1] Chips, vol. i. p. 9.
[2] S. V., p. xxviii.
[3] Wilson, vol. i. p. xxxvii.
[4] O. S. T., vol. i. p. 2.

were required, each class being destined for the performance of distinct offices. To each of these classes was assigned one of the Vedas, which contained the hymns required by that class. Thus the Sâma-Veda was the prayer-book of the Udgâtri priests, or choristers, who chant the hymns. The Yajur-Veda was the prayer-book of the Adhvaryù priests, or attendant ministers, who prepare the ground, slay the victims, and so forth. The Atharva-Veda was said to be intended for the Brahman who was, according to one of the Brâhmanas, the "physician of the sacrifice;" the general superintendent who was to tell if any mistake had been committed in it.[1] For the fourth class, the Hotri priests, or reciters of hymns, no special collection was made in the form of a liturgy. They used the Rig-Veda, a collection of the hymns in general without any special object, and they were supposed to know the sacred poetry without the help of a prayer-book.[2]

Originally preserved by scattered individuals (for the Mantra part of the Vedas [or their Sanhitâ] was composed in an age when writing was not in use), the hymns were subsequently collected and arranged in their present form: a task which Indian tradition assigns to Vyâsa, the Arranger, but which was probably the work of many different scholars, possibly during many generations. The same tradition asserts that each Veda was collected, under Vyâsa's superintendence, by a different editor; and that the collections, transmitted from these primary compilers to

[1] A. B., 5. 5.—vol. ii. p. 376.
[2] A. S. L., pp. 175, 473, and Chips, vol. i. p. 9.

their disciples, were, in the course of transmission, rearranged in various ways, until the number of Sanhitâs of each Veda in circulation was very considerable. Each school had its own version, but the differences are supposed by Wilson to have concerned only the order, not the matter of the Sûktas.

The extreme antiquity of our extant Veda is guaranteed by the amplest testimony. In the indexes compiled by native scholars 500 or 600 years before Christ, "we find every hymn, every verse, every word and syllable of the Veda accurately counted."[1] Before this was done, not only was the whole vast collection complete, but it was ancient; for had it been a recent composition it would not have enjoyed the pre-eminent sanctity which rendered it the object of this minute attention. And not only is the Veda ancient, but it has been shown that, from the variety of its component strata, it must have been the growth of no small period of time, its earliest elements being of an almost unfathomable antiquity. Max Müller, who has elaborately treated this question, divides the Vaidik age—the age during which the Veda was in process of formation—into four great epochs. The most primitive hymns of the Rig-Veda he attributes to what he terms *the Chhandas period* (from Chhandas, or metre), the limits of which cannot be fixed in the ascending direction, but which descends no later than 1000 B.C. And he thinks that "we cannot well assign a date more recent than 1200 to 1500 before our era"[2] for the composition of these hymns. The ten books of the Rig-Veda, however,

[1] Chips, vol. i. p. 11. [2] Ibid., vol. i. p. 13.

comprise the poetry of two different ages. Some of the hymns betray a more recent origin, and must be assigned to the second, or *Mantra period.* These comparatively modern compositions belong to a time which may have extended from about 1000 to about 800 B.C. After this we enter on the *Brâhmana period,* in which the Rig-Veda-Sanhitâ not only existed, but had reached the stage of being misinterpreted, its original sense having been forgotten. During this period—which we may place from B.C. 800 to 600—the national thought took the form of prose, and the Brâhmanas were written. Here the age of actually-inspired literature terminates, and we arrive at the *Sûtra period,* which may have lasted till 200 B.C. Works of high authority, but not in the strict sense revealed works, were produced during these four hundred years.[1] An equal, or greater antiquity is usually claimed by other Sanskritists for these several classes of sacred literature. Wilson would place Manu (who belongs to the Sûtra period) not lower than the fifth or sixth century; the Brâhmana literature in the seventh or eighth; and would allow at least four or five centuries before this for the composition and currency of the hymns, thus reaching the date of 1200 or 1300 before the Christian era.[2]

Haug, who believes that "a strict distinction between a Chhandas and Mantra period is hardly admissible," and that certain sacrificial formulas, considered by Max Müller to be more recent, are in fact some centuries older than the finished hymns ascribed by that scholar to the Chhandas age, carries

[1] A. S. L., *passim.* [2] Wilson, vol. i. p. xlvii.

back the composition of both Sanhitâ and Brâhmana to a much earlier date. "The bulk of the Brâhmanas" he assigns to B.C. 1400–1200; and "the bulk of the Sanhitâs" to B.C. 2000–1400; while "the oldest hymns and sacrificial formulas may be a few hundred years more ancient still," and thus "the very commencement of Vedic literature" might be between B.C. 2400 and 2000.[1] While Benfey, considering that the Prâtiśâkhyas (a branch of the Sûtras) must have been composed from B.C. 800 to 600, observes that the text of the Sâma-Veda must extend beyond this epoch.[2]

Of the several Sanhitâs, that of the Rig-Veda (whose name is derived from a word *rich*, praise) is usually considered the most ancient, though Benfey expresses the opinion that the text of the Sâma-Veda may possibly be borrowed from an older version of the Rig-Veda than that before us.[3] Max Müller, on the other hand, conceives the Sâma and Yajur-Vedas to have been probably the production of the Brâhmana period.[4] He even denies to any but the Rich the right to be called Veda at all.[5] Whatever claim, or want of claim, they may possess to the honour, it is certain that they have for more than 2000 years invariably received it at the hands of the Hindus themselves. So far from admitting the pre-eminence of the Rich, the ancient Hindus, according to one of their descendants, held the Sâma in the highest veneration.[6] If a doubt can exist as to the canonicity of any one of them, it can only apply to the Atharva.

[1] A. B., vol. i. pp. 47, 48.
[2] S. V., p. xxix.
[3] Ibid., p. xxix.
[4] A. S. L., p. 457.
[5] Chips, vol. i. p. 9.
[6] Chhand. Up., introduction, p. 1.

Veda; for in certain texts we find mention made of three Vedas only, the Atharva, from its comparatively late origin, having apparently been long denied the privilege of admission to an equal rank with its compeers.

Whatever their antiquity, the sanctity of these works in Indian opinion is of the highest order. Never has the theory of inspiration been pushed to such an extreme. The Veda was the direct creation of Brahma; and the Rishis, or Sages, who are the nominal authors of the hymns, did not compose them, but simply "saw" them. Although, therefore, the name of one of these seers is coupled with each hymn, it must not be supposed that he did more than perceive the divine poem which was revealed to his privileged vision. And the Veda is distinguished as *Śruti*, Revelation, from the *Smriti*, Tradition, under which term is included a great variety of works enjoying a high, but not an independent, authority. They are to be accepted, in theory at least, only when they agree with the Veda, and to be set aside if they happen to differ from it; while no such thing as a contradiction within the body of the Veda is for a moment to be thought of as possible, apparent inconsistencies being only due to our imperfect interpretations. The Śruti class comprises only the Mantra of each Veda and its Brâhmanas; the Smriti consists of the great national epics, namely the Râmâyana and Mahâbhârata; the Mânava-Dharma-Śâstra, or Menu; the Purânas; the Sûtras, or aphorisms; and the so-called six Vedângas, a term indicating six branches of study carried on by the help of treatises on the pronunciation, grammar, metre, explanation of words, astronomy, and ceremonial of

the Veda. How thoroughly the Veda was analysed, how minutely every word of it was investigated, is shown by the fact that these Vedângas all have direct reference to it, and were intended to assist in its comprehension. And in ancient times it was the duty of Brahmans to be well acquainted both with the Sûktas (hymns), and with their application to ritual. A Brahman, indeed, who wanted to marry was not obliged to devote more than twelve years to learning the Veda, but an unmarrying Brahman might spend forty-eight years upon it.[1]

SUBDIVISION 1.—*The Sanhitâ*

Passing now to a more detailed consideration of the Mantra division, we find that the Rig-Veda-Sanhitâ—the most comprehensive specimen of this division—comprises more than a thousand short poems, of which the vast majority are addressed to one or more of the Indian gods. A few only, and those believed to be of later origin, are of a different character. This collection is divided in two ways; into ten Mandalas, or eight Ashtakas, the two divisions being quite independent of one another. Under each of these greater heads are several lesser ones, which it is needless to enumerate. The deities to whom the hymns are devoted are exceedingly various and numerous, but as this is not an essay specially intended to elucidate the Veda, but aiming only at a general comparison of this with other sacred books, it would be going beyond our scope to attempt a full account of their several names, attributes, and honours. A few only of the more conspicuous gods need be noticed.

[1] A. S. L., p. 503.

Of these, Agni, as the one with whose praises the Rig-Veda opens, and who, next to Indra, is the principal character in the Vedic hymnology, claims our attention first. He is the god of fire, or more literally, he is the fire itself, and a god at the same time. His name is almost identical with the Latin *Ignis*. He is frequently spoken of as generated by the rubbing of sticks, for in this manner did the Rishis kindle the fire required for their sacrifices. The sudden birth of the fiery element in consequence of this process must have impressed them as profoundly mysterious. They allude to it under various images. Thus, the upper stick is said to impregnate the lower, which brings forth Agni. He is the bearer of human sacrifices to the gods; a kind of telegraph from earth to heaven. Many are the blessings asked of him. But let the Rishis speak for themselves. Here is the first Sûkta of the Rig-Veda-Sanhitâ:—

1. "I praise Agni, the household priest, the divine offerer of the sacrifice, the inviter who keeps all treasures. 2. Agni, worthy of the praises of the ancient Rishis, and also of ours, do thou bring hither the gods. 3. By Agni, *the sacrificer* enjoys wealth, that grows from day to day, confers renown, and surrounds him with heroes. 4. Agni, the sacrifice which thou keepest from all sides uninvaded, approaches surely the gods. 5. Agni, inviter, performer of gracious deeds, thou who art truthful, and who shinest with various glories, come thou, O God, with the gods. 6. The prosperity, which thou, O Agni, bestowest upon the worshipper, will be in truth *a prosperity* to thee, O Angiras. 7. We approach thee in our minds, O Agni, day after day, by night and day, to offer thee our adoration. 8. Thee the radiant guardian of the meet *reward* of the sacrifices, who is resplendent and increasing in his sacred house. 9. Be thou, O Agni, accessible to us, as a father is to the son; be near us for our welfare."[1]

[1] Roer, p. 1.

Even more important than Agni is Indra, the great national god of the Hindus. He is above all things a combative god. His strength is immense, and his worshippers implore him to give them victory and power. He slays the demon Vrittra, a myth symbolising the dispersion of clouds by the sun. Above all, he loves the juice of the Soma plant (*Asclepias acida*), which is poured out to him abundantly in sacrifice, which he consumes with avidity, and from which he derives renewed force and energy. These two stanzas, taken from the Sâma-Veda, express some of his attributes:—

"Thou, O Indra, art glorious, thou art victorious, thou art the lord of strength; thou conquerest the strong enemies singly and alone, thou unconquered refuge of men. To thee, living One, we pray; to thee now the very wise, for treasures, as for our share; may thy blessing be granted us."[1]

The following hymn brings into especial prominence the more warlike functions of Indra, and may be regarded as a prayer "in the time of war and tumults:"—

8. "May Indra be the leader of these (our armies); may Brihaspati, Largess, Sacrifice and Soma march in front; may the host of Maruts precede the crushing, victorious armies of the gods. May the fierce host of the vigorous Indra, of King Varuna, of the Âdityas, and the Maruts (go before us); the shout of the great-souled, conquering, world-shaking gods, has ascended. . . . 10. Rouse, O opulent god, the weapons, rouse the souls of our warriors, stimulate the power of the mighty men; may shouts arise from the conquering chariots. 11. May Indra be ours when the standards clash; may our arrows be victorious; may our strong men gain the upperhand; preserve us, O gods, in the fray. 12.

[1] S. V., ii. 6. 2. 12.

'Bewildering the hearts of our enemies, O Apvâ,[1] take possession of their limbs and pass onward; come near, burn them with fires in their hearts; may our enemies fall into blind darkness."[2]

Indra's Soma-drinking propensities are not particularly alluded to in these verses: elsewhere they form the ever-recurring burden of the chants of which he is the hero. Thus, to take but one specimen, which, by its resemblance to others, may fitly stand for all, he is thus lauded:—

1. "May the Somas delight thee! bestow grace, O hurler of lightning! destroy him who hates the priest. 2. Thou who art praiseworthy, drink our drink! thou art sprinkled with streams of honey! from thee, O Indra, glory is derived. . . . . 4. The Indus[3] stream into thee, like rivers, Indra! into the sea, and never overfill thee."[4]

Indra is, in fact, the Zeus of Indian mythology; the thunderer, the god of the sky, the all-powerful protector of men and destroyer of the demons of darkness. His functions are easily understood, but it is curious that the Soma, which is offered to him in sacrifice, and which he drinks with all the avidity of a confirmed toper, is itself celebrated as a god of very considerable powers. Soma appears to be regarded as a sort of mediator between the greatest gods and men, especially between man and Indra. He is repeatedly entreated to go to Indra, to flow around him, and thus to conciliate and delight him. But Soma can confer benefits independently. One poet implores him to stream forth blessing "on the ox, the man, and the horse; and, O king, blessing

[1] Apvâ is explained as a disease or fear.
[2] O. S. T., vol. v. p. 110.—Rig-Veda, x. 103.
[3] The Somas. [4] S. V., i. 3. 1. 1.

on plants."[1] In the hymns devoted to him he is raised to an exalted station among the celestial beings, while the sacrifice in which he is drunk by the priests is the capital rite in the Brahmanical liturgy.[2] The most eminent virtues are inherent in this divine beverage, when taken with all the ceremonies prescribed by traditional law. The Soma juice has, in the opinion of Hindu theologians "the power of uniting the sacrificer on this earth with the celestial King Soma," and making him "an associate of the gods, and an inhabitant of the celestial world."[3] Such was the excellence of this juice, that none but Brahmans were permitted to imbibe it. Kings, at their inaugural ceremonies, received a goblet which was nominally Soma, but on account of their inferior caste they were in fact put off with some kind of spirituous liquor which was supposed, by a mystical transformation, to receive the properties of that most holy divinity.[4] Agreeably to this theory of Soma's extensive powers, he is invoked in such terms, for instance, as these:—

7. "Place me, O purified god, in that everlasting and imperishable world where there is eternal light and glory. O Indu (Soma), flow for Indra. 8. Make me immortal in the world where king Vaivasvata (Yama, the son of Vivasvat) lives, where is the innermost sphere of the sky, where those great waters flow."[5]

Singular as it may seem that the juice of the Soma-plant should be at once an object sacrificed on the altar to other gods and a god himself, such a confusion of attributes will be less surprising to those who

[1] S. V., ii. 1. 1. 1.
[2] A. B., vol. i. p. 59.
[3] Ibid., vol. i. pp. 40, 80.
[4] Ibid., vol. ii. p. 522.
[5] O. S. T., vol. v. p. 266.—Rig-Veda, ix. 113.

are familiar with the Christian theory of the Atonement, in which the same God is at once the person who decrees the sacrifice, the person who accepts it, and the victim. At least the double function of Soma is less perplexing than the triple function of Christ.

Considerable among Vedic deities are the Maruts, or gods of tempest. They are in intimate alliance with Indra, to whom their violent nature is closely akin. Their attributes are simple. A notion of them may perhaps be gained from these verses:—

1 "What then now? When will you take (us) as a dear father takes his son by both hands, O ye gods, for whom the sacred grass has been trimmed? 2. Whither now? On what errand of yours are you going, in heaven, not on earth? Where are your cows sporting? 3. Where are your newest favours, O Maruts? Where the blessings? Where all delights? . . . . 6. Let not one sin after another, difficult to be conquered, overcome us; may it depart together with lust. 7. Truly they are furious and powerful; even to the desert the Rudriyas bring rain that is never dried up. 8. The lightning lows like a cow, it follows as a mother follows after her young, that the shower (of the Maruts) may be let loose. 9. Even by day the Maruts create darkness with the water-bearing cloud, when they drench the earth. 10. From the shout of the Maruts over the whole space of the earth, men reeled forward. 11. Maruts on your strong-hoofed steeds go on easy roads after those bright ones (the clouds) which are still locked up. 12. May your felloes be strong, the chariots, and their horses; may your reins be well fashioned. 13. Speak out for ever with thy voice to praise the Lord of prayer, Agni, who is like a friend, the bright one. 14. Fashion a hymn in thy mouth! Expand like a cloud! Sing a song of praise. 15. Worship the host of the Maruts, the brisk, the praiseworthy, the singers. May the strong ones stay here among us."[1]

The most charming member of the Vedic pantheon, and the one who seems to have called forth from the

[1] R. V. S., vol. i. p. 65.—Rig-Veda, i. 38.

Rishis the deepest poetical feeling, is Ushas (Ἑως), the Dawn. Her continual reappearance, or birth, morning after morning, seems to have filled them with delight and tenderness. The hymn now to be quoted—too long to be extracted in full—gives expression to the feelings with which they gazed upon this ever-recurring mystery:—

2. "The fair and bright Ushas, with her bright child (the Sun), has arrived; to her the dark (night) has relinquished her abodes; kindred to one another, immortal, alternating Day and Night go on changing colour. 3. The same is the never-ending path of the two sisters, which they travel, commanded by the gods. They strive not, they rest not, the prolific Night and Dawn, concordant, though unlike. 4. The shining Ushas, leader of joyful voices (or hymns) has been perceived; she has opened for us the doors (of the sky); setting in motion all moving things, she has revealed to us riches. Ushas has awakened all creatures. . . . 6. (Arousing) one to seek royal power, another to follow after fame, another for grand efforts, another to pursue as it were his particular object,—Ushas awakes all creatures to consider their different modes of life. 7. She, the daughter of the sky, has been beheld breaking forth, youthful, clad in shining attire: mistress of all earthly treasures. Auspicious Ushas, shine here to-day. 8. Ushas follows the track of the Dawns that are past, and is the first of the unnumbered Dawns that are to come, breaking forth, arousing life and awaking every one that was dead. . . . 10. How great is the interval that lies between the Dawns which have arisen, and those which are yet to arise! Ushas yearns longingly after the former Dawns, and gladly goes on shining with the others (that are to come). 11. Those mortals are gone who saw the earliest Ushas dawning; we shall gaze upon her now; and the men are coming who are to behold her on future morns. . . . 13. Perpetually in former days did the divine Ushas dawn; and now to-day the magnificent goddess beams upon this world: undecaying, immortal, she marches on by her own will."[1]

[1] O. S. T., vol. v. p. 188.—Rig-Veda, i. 113.

Hardly a trace of a moral element is to be found in those productions of the Rishis which have hitherto been quoted. And such as these are is the general character of the Rig-Veda-Sanhitâ. It consists in petitions for purely material advantages, coupled with unbounded celebrations of the power of the god invoked, often under the coarsest anthropomorphic images. But while it must be admitted that the sentiment expressed is rarely of a high order, it must not be supposed that the old Hindu gods are altogether destitute of ethical attributes. Marked exceptions to the general tenor of the supplications offered to them certainly occur. There are passages which betray a decided consciousness of sin, a desire to be forgiven, and a conviction that certain kinds of conduct entail divine disapprobation, while other kinds bring divine approbation. Thus, in the hymns addressed to the Âdityas, a class of gods generally reckoned as twelve in number, and to Mitra and Varuna, two of these Âdityas, such feelings are plainly expressed.[1] Of these two, Mitra is sometimes explained as the Sun, or the god of Day, Varuna as the god of Night. Varuna —whose name corresponds to that of Ouranos—is a very great and powerful divinity, who is endowed by his adorers with the very highest attributes. He is said to have meted out heaven and earth, and to dwell in all worlds as their sovereign, embracing them within him.[2] He is said to witness sin, and is entreated to have mercy on sinners. One penitent poet implores Varuna to tell him for what offence he seeks to kill his worshipper and friend, for all the sages tell him that it is Varuna who is angry with

[1] O. S. T., vol. v. p. 56 ff. [2] Ibid., vol. v. p. 61.

him. And he pleadingly contends that he was not an intentional culprit; he has been seduced by "wine, anger, dice, or thoughtlessness." Another begs the god that, in whatever way mortals may have broken his laws, he will be gracious. A third admits that he, who was Varuna's friend, has offended against him, but asks that they who are guilty may not reap the fruits of their sin; concluding with this amicable hint: "Do thou, a wise god, grant protection to him who praises thee." [1] "The attributes and functions ascribed to Varuna," observes Dr Muir, "impart to his character a moral elevation and sanctity far surpassing that attributed to any other Vedic deity." [2] And while even in the earlier portion of the Rig-Veda—from which the above expressions have been collected by Dr Muir—such qualities are ascribed to Varuna, we shall find a still higher conception of his character in a later work, the Atharva-Veda. Here is the description of the Lord of Heaven from the mouth of the Indian Psalmist:—

1. "The great lord of these worlds sees as if he were near. If a man thinks he is walking by stealth, the gods know it all. 2. If a man stands or walks or hides, if he goes to lie down or to get up, what two people sitting together whisper, King Varuna knows it, he is there as the third. 3. This earth, too, belongs to Varuna, the king, and this wide sky with its ends far apart. The two seas (the sky and the ocean) are Varuna's loins; he is also contained in this small drop of water. 4. He who should flee far beyond the sky, even he would not be rid of Varuna, the king. His spies proceed from heaven towards this world; with thousand eyes they overlook this earth. 5. King Varuna sees all this that is between heaven and earth, and what is beyond. He has counted the twinklings of the eyes of men. As a player

1 O. S. T., vol. v. pp. 66, 67.

2 Ibid., vol. v. p. 66.

throws the dice, he settles all things. 6. May all thy fatal nooses, which stand spread out seven by seven and threefold, catch the man who tells a lie; may they pass by him who tells the truth."[1]

A consciousness of the unity of Deity, under whatever form he may be worshipped, adumbrated here and there in earlier hymns, becomes very prominent in the later portions of the Veda. From the most ancient times, possibly, occasional sages may have attained the conception so familiar to the Hindu thinkers of a later age, that a single mysterious essence of divinity pervaded the universe. And in the tenth book of the Rig-Veda, which is generally admitted to belong to a more recent age than the other nine books, as also in the Atharva-Veda, this essence is celebrated under various names; as Purusha, as Brahma, as Prajâpati (Lord), or Skambha (Support). The hymns in which this consciousness appears are extremely mystical, but a notice of the Veda, however slight, would be very imperfect without a due recognition of their presence. They form the speculative element partly in the midst of, partly succeeding to, the simple, practical, naked presentation of the commonplace daily wants and physical desires of the early Rishis. Take the following texts from the first book of the Rig-Veda. They give utterance to an incipient sentiment of divine unity. The first celebrates a goddess Aditi: "Aditi is the sky, Aditi is the air, Aditi is the mother and father and son. Aditi is all the gods and the five classes of men. Aditi is whatever has been born. Aditi is whatever shall be born."[2]

[1] A. S. L.—Atharva-Veda, iv. 16.

[2] O. S. T., vol. v. p. 354—Rig-Veda, i. 89. 10.

More remarkable than this—for we may suspect here a sectarian desire to glorify a favourite goddess—is this assertion: "They call him Indra, Mitra, Varuna, Agni; and he is the celestial (well-winged) Garutmat. Sages name variously that which is but one: they call it Agni, Yama, Mâtarisvan."[1] In the tenth book of the Rig-Veda, the presence of the speculative element in the theology of the Rishis,—their longing to find a universal Being whom they could adore,—is much more marked. Thus do they express this sentiment:—"Wise poets make the beautiful-winged, though he is one, manifold by words."[2] Or more elaborately thus:—

1. "In the beginning there arose the golden Child—He was the one born lord of all that is. He stablished the earth and this sky;—Who is the God to whom we shall offer our sacrifice? 2. He who gives life, He who gives strength; whose command all the bright gods revere; whose shadow is immortality, whose shadow is death;—Who is the God to whom we shall offer our sacrifice? 3. He who through his power is the one King of the breathing and awakening world; He who governs all, man and beast; Who is the God to whom we shall offer our sacrifice? 4. He whose greatness these snowy mountains, whose greatness the sea proclaims, with the distant river—He whose these regions are, as it were, His two arms;—Who is the God to whom we shall offer our sacrifice? 5. He through whom the sky is bright and the earth firm—He through whom the heaven was stablished, —nay, the highest heaven;—He who measured out the light in the air;—Who is the God to whom we shall offer our sacrifice? 6. He to whom heaven and earth, standing firm by His will, took up, trembling inwardly—He over whom the rising sun shines forth; —Who is the God to whom we shall offer our sacrifice? 7. Wherever the mighty water-clouds went, where they placed the seed and lit the fire, thence arose He who is the sole life of the bright

[1] O. S. T., vol. v. p. 353.—Rig-Veda, i. 164. 46.
[2] Chips, vol. i. p. 29.—Rig-Veda, x. 114. 5.

gods;—Who is the God to whom we shall offer our sacrifice? 8. He who by his might looked even over the water-clouds, the clouds which gave strength and lit the sacrifice; He who alone is God above all gods;—Who is the God to whom we shall offer our sacrifice? 9. May He not destroy us—He the creator of the earth; or He, the righteous, who created the heaven; He also created the bright and mighty waters;—Who is the God to whom we shall offer our sacrifice?"[1]

The same book contains a very important hymn, entitled the Purusha Sûkta. In it we find ourselves transported from the transparent elemental worship of the ancient Aryas into the misty region of Brahmanical subtleties. Purusha appears to be conceived as the universal essence of the world, all existences being but one quarter of him. The theory of sacrifice occupies, as in the later Indian literature generally, a prominent position. Purusha's sacrifice involved the momentous consequences of the creation of the several Vedas and of living creatures. The four castes sprang from different parts of his person, the parts corresponding to their relative dignity. The purpose of this portion is obvious, namely, to give greater sanctity to the system of caste, a system to which the earlier hymns make no allusion, and which we may suppose to have grown up subsequently to the era of their composition. Tedious as it is, the Purusha Sûkta is too weighty to be quite passed over.

1. "Purusha has a thousand heads, a thousand eyes, a thousand feet. On every side enveloping the earth, he overpassed (it) by a space of ten fingers. 2. Purusha himself is this whole (universe), whatever has been and whatever shall be. He is also the lord of immortality, since (or when) by food he expands. 3. Such is his greatness, and Purusha is superior to this. All existences are a

[1] Chips, vol. i. p. 29, or A. S. L., p. 569.—Rig-Veda, x. 121.

quarter of him; and three-fourths of him are that which is immortal in the sky. 4. With three-quarters Purusha mounted upwards. A quarter of him was again produced here. He was then diffused everywhere over things which eat and things which do not eat. 5. From him was born Virāj, and from Virāj, Purusha. When born, he extended beyond the earth, both behind and before. 6. When the gods performed a sacrifice with Purusha as the oblation, the spring was its butter, the summer its fuel, and the autumn its (accompanying) offering. 7. This victim, Purusha, born in the beginning, they immolated on the sacrificial grass. With him the gods, the Sādhyas, and the Rishis sacrificed. 8. From that universal sacrifice sprang the rich and sāman verses, the metnes and the yajush. 10. From it sprang horses, and all animals with two rows of teeth; kine sprang from it; from it goats and sheep. 11. When (the gods) divided Purusha, into how many parts did they cut him up? what was his mouth? what arms (had he)? what (two objects) are said (to have been) his thighs and feet? 12. The Brahman was his mouth; the Râjanya was made his arms; the being (called) the Vaiśya, he was his thighs; the Śūdra sprang from his feet. 13. The moon sprang from his soul (manas), the sun from his eye, Indra and Agni from his mouth, and Vāyu from his breath. 14. From his navel arose the air, from his head the sky, from his feet the earth, from his ear the (four) quarters; in this manner (the gods) formed the worlds. 15. When the gods, performing sacrifice, bound Purusha as a victim, there were seven sticks (stuck up) for it (around the fire), and thrice seven pieces of fuel were made. 16. With sacrifice the gods performed the sacrifice. These were the earliest rites. These great powers have sought the sky, where are the former Sādhyas, gods."[1]

The wide interval which separates theological theories of this kind from the primitive hymns to the old polytheistic gods, is also marked by a tendency to personify abstract intellectual conceptions, and to confer exalted attributes upon them. Skambha, or Support, mentioned above; Kâla, Time, celebrated in

[1] O. S. T vol. i. p. 9.—Rig-Veda, x. 90.

the Atharva-Veda; Speech, endowed with personal powers in the tenth book of the Rig-Veda; Wisdom, to whom prayer is offered in the Atharva-Veda, are instances of this generalising tendency. As a specimen, the hymn to Wisdom may be taken, and readers may console themselves with the reflection that it is our last quotation from the Mantra part of the Veda:—

1. "Come to us, wisdom, the first, with cows and horses; (come) thou with the rays of the sun; thou art to us an object of worship. 2. To (obtain) the succour of the gods, I invoke wisdom the first, full of prayer, inspired by prayer, praised by rishis, imbibed by Brahmachārins. 3. We introduce within me that wisdom which Ribhus know, that wisdom which divine beings (asurāh) know, that excellent wisdom which rishis know. 4. Make me, O Agni, wise to-day with that wisdom which the wise rishis—the makers of things existing—know. 5. We introduce wisdom in the evening, wisdom in the morning, wisdom at noon, wisdom with the rays of the sun, and with speech."[1]

Interesting as the Mantra of the Vedas is from the fact of its being the oldest Bible of the Aryan race, it is impossible for modern readers to feel much enthusiasm for its contents. The patient labour of those scholars who have engaged in translations of some parts of it for the benefit of European readers is highly commendable, but it is probable that few who have read any considerable number of these hymns will be desirous of a further acquaintance with them, unless for the purpose of some special researches. Indeed, it may be said that the devoted industry of Benfey, Muir, Max Müller, and others, has placed more than a sufficient number of them within reach of the general public to enable us all

[1] O. S. T., vol. i. p. 255 note.—Atharva-Veda, vi. 108.

to judge of their literary value and their religious teaching. With regard to the former, it would be difficult to concede to them anything but a very modest place. In beauty of style, expression, or ideas, they appear to me to be almost totally deficient. Assuming, as we are entitled to do, that all the best specimens have been already culled by scholars eager to find something attractive in the Veda, it must be confessed that the general run of the hymns is singularly monotonous, and their language by no means conspicuous for poetical colouring. No doubt, poetry always loses in translation; but Isaiah and Homer are still beautiful in a German or English dress; the Sûktas of the Rig-Veda are not. A few exceptions no doubt occur, as in the stanzas to Ushas, or Dawn, quoted above, but the ordinary level is not a high one.

Although, however, the literary merit of the Veda cannot be ranked high, its value to the religious history of humanity at large, and of our race in particular, can hardly be overrated. To the comparative mythologist, above all, it possesses illimitable interest, from the new light it sheds upon the origin and significance of many of those world-wide tales which, in their metamorphosed Hellenic shape, could not be effectually brought under the process of dissection by which their primitive elements have now been laid bare. Mythology is beyond the province of this work, and therefore I purposely refrain from entering upon any explanation of the physical meaning of the old Aryan gods, or of the stories in which they figure.[1] All that I have to do with here is the

[1] All this will be found admirably treated in Mr Cox's "Mythology of the Aryan Nations."

grade attained in the development of religious feeling among those who worshipped them. And this, it is plain, was at first a very elementary one. The more striking phenomena of nature—the sun, the moon, the sky, the storms, the dawn, the fire—at first attracted their attention, and absorbed their adoration. To these personal beings, as they seemed to the awe-struck Rishis, petitions of the rudest type were confidently addressed. Very little allusion, if any, was made to the necessities of the moral nature; the craving for spiritual knowledge was scarcely felt; but great stress was laid on temporal prosperity. Boons of the most material kind were looked for at the hands of the gods. Plenty of offspring, plenty of physical strength, plenty of property, especially in cattle, and victory over enemies; such are the requests most commonly poured into the ears of Indra, or Agni, or the Maruts. These gods are regarded as the sympathising friends of men, and if they should fail to do what may reasonably be expected of a god, are almost upbraided for their negligence. The conception of their power is a high one, though that of their moral nature is still rudimentary. Their greatness and their glory, their victories, their splendour, are described in vigorous and high-sounding phrases. The changes are rung upon their peculiar attributes or their famous exploits. Each god in his turn is a great god; but all are separate individuals; there appears in the crude Aryan mind to be as yet no dawning of the perplexing questions on the unity of the Divine which troubled its later development. For as it progresses, the Hindu religion gradually changes. External calm, succeeding the wars of the

first settlers, promotes internal activity. The great problem of the Universe is no longer solved, five or six centuries after the older Rishis had passed away, in the simple fashion which satisfied their curiosity. Multiplicity is now resolved into unity; mystical abstractions take the place of the elementary powers of nature. Speech is a goddess; the Vedas themselves —as in the Purusha hymn—acquire a quasi-divinity; the Brahmachârin, or student of theology, is endowed with supernatural attributes, due to the sacred character of his pursuits. Sacrifice, fixed and regulated down to the smallest minutiæ, has a peculiar efficacy, and becomes something of far deeper meaning than a merely acceptable present to the gods. Every posture, every word, every tone acquires importance. There are charms, there are curses, there are incantations for good and evil purposes, for the acquisition of wealth or the destruction of an enemy. It is by its collection of such magical formulæ that the Atharva-Veda is distinguished from its three predecessors. It forms the last stone laid upon the edifice of the genuine Veda, an edifice built up by the labour of many centuries, and including the whole of that original revelation to which the centuries that succeeded it bowed down in reverence and in faith.

SUBDIVISION 2.—*The Brâhmanas.*

Attached to this edifice as an outgrowth rather than an integral part, the treatises known as Brâhmanas took their place as appendages of the Sanhitâ. Although they are reckoned by the Hindus as belonging to the Śruti, although their nominal rank is thus

not inferior to that of the true Veda, yet it must have taken them many generations to acquire a position of honour to which nothing but tradition could possibly entitle them. For any gleams of poetical inspiration, of imaginative religious feeling, of naturalness or simple earnestness that had shone athwart the minds of devout authors in preceding ages, had apparently passed away when the Brâhmanas were composed. They are the elaborate disquisitions of scholars, not the outpourings of men of feeling. Religion was cut and dried when they were written; every part of it has become a matter of definition, of theory, of classification. If in the Vedic hymns we are placed before a stage where religious faith is a living body, whose movements, perhaps uncouth, are still energetic and genuine, the Brâhmanas, on the other hand, take us into the dissecting room, where the constituent elements of its corpse are exposed to our observation. Not indeed that a true or deep faith had ceased in the Brâhmana period; such an assertion would no doubt be extravagant; but the Brâhmanas themselves are the products of minds more given to analysis than to sentiment, and of an age in which the predominant tendency, at least among cultivated Brahmans, was not so much to feel religion as to think about it. It is so everywhere. The Hebrew Bible, once fixed and completed, gives rise to the Mishnah. The Apostles and Fathers of the Christian Church are followed by a race of schoolmen. The simple Sûtras of Buddhism, replete with plain, world-wide lessons of moral truth, give place to the abstruse developments of incomprehensible theology. Thus the Brâhmanas mark the epoch when the Veda had finally ceased to grow, and

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its every word and letter had become the object of an unquestioning adoration as the immediate emanation of God.

But among a people so subtle and so inquisitive in all matters of religious belief as the Hindus, opinion could not rest unmoved upon the original foundation. Their minds did not, like those of the Jews, stop short for ever in their intellectual progression, chained to the unshakeable rock of a god-given Revelation. Ever active, ever attracted to the enigmas of life, the Brahmans pushed their speculations into new regions of thought, pondered upon new problems, and invented new solutions. Not that we are to expect to find in the literature of this period any valuable discoveries or any very striking philosophy. The true philosophical systems came later. But still we do find a restless spirit of inquiry, ever prompting fresh efforts to conceive the significance of the gods or to penetrate the mysteries of nature, though the questions discussed are often trifling, and the results arrived at frivolous.

Every Veda has, as already stated, its own Brâhmana or Brâhmanas. Thus, two of these treatises appertain to the Rig-Veda; three to the Sâma-Veda, one to the Black and one to the White Yajur-Veda, and one to the Atharva-Veda.[1] Appended to the Brâhmanas, and forming, according to Dr Muir, their "most recent portions," are the Âranyakas and Upanishads, a kind of supplementary works devoted to the elucidation of the highest points of theology. The Brâhmanas present an example of Ritualism in all its glory. They fix the exact nature

[1] O. S. T., vol. i. p. 5

of every part of every ceremony; describe minutely the mode in which each sacrifice is to be offered; mention the Mantras to be recited on each occasion; declare the benefits to be expected from the several rites, and explain the reasons—drawn from the history of the gods—why they are all to be performed in this particular way and order, and in no other. They are in fact liturgies, accompanied by exposition. Hence they are totally unfit for quotation in a general work, for they would be incomprehensible without an accompanying essay on the Vedic sacrifices, entering into details which would interest none but professional students of the subject.

Thus, the Aitareya Brâhmana occupies itself entirely with the duties of the Hotri priests; for the recitation of the Rig-Veda, to which this Brâhmana belonged, was their province. Occasionally, however, the Brâhmanas, Upanishads, and Âranyakas are enlivened by the introduction of apologues, intended to illustrate the point of theological dogma to which the author is addressing himself. Some of these apologues are curious, though the style in which they are related is generally so prolix as to preclude extraction. A notion of them may be gathered from condensed statements. Thus, in the Brihad Âranyaka Upanishad a story is told of a dispute among the vital organs as to which of them was "best founded," *i.e.*, most essential to life. To obtain the decision of this controversy they repaired to Brahma, who said, "He amongst you is best founded by whose departure the body is found to suffer most." Hereupon Speech departed, and returning after a year's absence, inquired how the others had lived without it. "They said,

'As dumb people who do not speak by speech, breathing by the vital breath, seeing by the eye, hearing by the ear, thinking by the mind, and begetting children, so have we lived.'" The eye, the ear, the mind, the organ of generation, each departed for a year, and, *mutatis mutandis*, with similar results; blindness, deafness, idiocy, impotence, were all compatible with life. Lastly, "the vital breath being about to depart, as a great, noble horse from the Sindhu country raises its hoofs, so it shook those vital organs from their places. They said, 'Do not depart, O Venerable. We cannot live without thee.' 'If I am such, then offer sacrifice to me.' (They answered)—'Be it so.'" All the other organs hereupon admitted that their own existence depended on that of the vital breath.[1]

Several narratives in various Brâhmanas point to the fact that theological knowledge was not in these early days confined to the single caste by which it was afterwards monopolised, for they speak of well-read kings by whom Brahmans were instructed. In the Chhândogya Upanishad, for example, five members of the Brahmanical caste engaged in a debate upon the question "Which is our soul and which is Brahma?" Unable to satisfy themselves, they repaired, accompanied by another theologian who had been unable to answer them, to a monarch named Aśvapati, and declining his proffered gifts, requested him to impart to them the knowledge he possessed of the Universal Soul. He accordingly asked each of them in turn which soul he adored. The first replied that he adored the heaven; the second, the sun; the

[1] B. A. U., ch. vi. p. 259.

third, the winds; the fourth, the sky; the fifth, water; the sixth, the earth. To each of them in turn the king admitted that it was indeed a partial manifestation of the Universal Soul which he worshipped, and that its adoration would confer some advantages. But, he finally added, "You consume food, knowing the Universal Soul to be many; but he who adoreth that Universal Soul which pervadeth the heaven and the earth, and is the principal object indicated by (the pronoun) *I*, consumeth food everywhere and in all regions, in every form and in every faculty." Of that all-pervading Soul the several phenomena of the visible Universe worshipped by the Brahmans in their ignorance are but parts.[1] Other Brâhmanas tell similar stories of the occasional pre-eminence of the Kshattriya caste in the rivalry of learning. Thus, the Śatapatha Brâhmana, the Brihad Âranyaka Upanishad, and the Kaushîtaki Brâhmana Upanishad, all refer to a certain king Ajâtaśatru, who proved himself superior in theological disputation to a Brahman named Bālāki, "renowned as a man well-read in the Veda." Let us take the version of the last-named Upanishad. Bālāki proposed to "declare divine knowledge" to the king, who offered to give him a thousand cows for his tuition. But after he had propounded his views on the Deity, and had been put to shame by the king's answers, the latter said, "Thou hast vainly proposed to me; let me teach thee divine knowledge. He, son of Balaka, who is the maker of these souls, whose work that is,—he is the object of knowledge." Convinced of his ignorance, Bālāki proposed to become the king's pupil.

[1] Chhand. Up., ch. v. section 11-18, p. 92-97.

"The king replied, 'I regard it as an inversion of the proper rule that a Kshattriya should initiate a Brahman. But come, I will instruct thee.'"[1]

Both these stories illustrate the striving towards conceptions of the unity of the divine essence which is characteristic of this speculative age. The next, from the Śatapatha Brâhmana, has reference to another important point,—the future of the soul. A young Brahman, called Śvetaketu, came to a monarch who inquired whether he had received a suitable education from his father. The youth replied that he had. Hereupon the king proceeded to put him through an examination, in which he completely broke down. One of the questions was this:—"Dost thou know the means of attaining the path which leads to the gods, or that which leads to the Pitris;[2] by what act the one or the other is gained?" In other words, did he know the way to heaven? The student did not. Vexed at his failure, the young man hastened to his father, reproached him with having declared that he was instructed, and complained that the Râjanya had asked him five questions, of which he knew not even one. Gautama inquired what they were, and on hearing them, assured his son that he had taught him all he himself knew. "But come, let us proceed thither, and become his pupils." Receiving his guests with due respect, the king offered Gautama a boon. Gautama begged for an explanation of the five questions. "That," said the king, "is one of the divine boons; ask one of those that are human." But Gautama protested that he had wealth enough of all kinds, and

[1] O. S. T., vol. i. p. 431. [2] Ancestors (*patres*).

added, "Be not illiberal towards us in respect to that which is immense, infinite, boundless." The king accordingly accepted them as his pupils, saying, "Do not attach any blame to me, as your ancestors (did not). This knowledge has never heretofore dwelt in any Brahman; but I shall declare it to thee. For who should refuse thee when thou so speakest?"[1]

Unhistorical as they probably are in their details, these traditions are curious both as illustrating the predominant inclination to speculative inquiries, and the fact that in those inquiries the priestly caste was sometimes outshone by their more secular rivals. The following quotation bears upon another doctrine, the transcendent merit of patience under trials, even of the severest kind. Manu, the typical ancestor of mankind, is represented as resigning his most precious possessions to enable impious priests to perform a sacrifice :—

"Manu had a bull. Into it an Asura-slaying, enemy-slaying voice had entered. In consequence of this (bull's) snorting and bellowing, Asuras and Râkshasas[2] were continually destroyed. Then the Asuras said, 'This bull, alas! does us mischief; how shall we overcome him?' Now there were two priests of the Asuras called Kilâta and Akuli. They said, 'Manu is a devout believer: let us make trial of him.' They went and said to him, 'Let us sacrifice for thee.' 'With what victim?' he asked. 'With this bull,' they replied. 'Be it so,' he answered. When it had been slaughtered, the voice departed out of it, and entered into Manu's wife Mânavî. Wherever they hear her speaking, the Asuras and Râkshasas continue to be destroyed in consequence of her voice. The Asuras said, 'She does us yet more mischief; for the human voice speaks more.' Kilâta and Akuli said, 'Manu is a devout believer: let us make trial of him.' They came and

[1] O. S. T., vol. i. p. 434.

[2] These are species of demons.

said to him, 'Manu, let us sacrifice for thee.' 'With what victim?' he asked. 'With this (thy) wife,' they replied. 'Be it so,' he answered."[1]

Sometimes, though not often, the Brâhmanas contain references to moral conduct. A very theological definition of Duty is given in the Chhândogya Upanishad, where it is stated, "Threefold is the division of Duty. Sacrifice, study, and charity constitute the first; penance is the second; and residence by a Brahmachârin[2] exclusively in the house of a tutor is the third. All those [who attend to these duties] attain virtuous regions; the believer in Brahma alone attains to immortality."[3] In another Brâhmana it is asserted that "the marriage of Faith and Truth is a most happy one. For by Faith and Truth joined they conquer the celestial world."[4] And the story of Śunahśepa, which contains an emphatic repudiation of human sacrifice, has a moral bearing. As a rule, however, the Brâhmanas do not concern themselves with ethical questions. The rules of sacrifice, and the doctrines of a complicated theology, are their main business; and the topics they are thus led to debate in elaborate detail must frequently impress the European reader as not only uninteresting, but unmeaning.

[1] O. S. T., vol. i. p. 188.
[2] A student of theology.
[3] Ait. B., vii. 2. 10.
[4] Chhand. Up., ch. ii. sec. 23.

SECTION IV.—THE TRIPITAKA.[1]

When the master-mind who, by oral and personal instruction, has led his disciples to the knowledge of new and invaluable truths passes away—when the lips that taught them are closed for ever, and the intellect that solved the problems of human life is at rest, when the soul that met the spiritual cravings of their souls is no more near them—a necessity at once arises for the collection of the sayings, the apologues, or the parables which can now be heard no more, and which only live in the memories of those who heard them. The precious possession must not be lost. The light must not be suffered to die out. Either the words of the Departed One must be transmitted orally from disciple to disciple, from generation to generation (as happens in countries where writing is uncommon or unknown), or they must be rendered imperishable by being once for all recorded in books.

Such was the course of events upon the death of

[1] No complete translation of the Tripitaka exists, or is ever likely to exist, in any European language. Its vast extent, and the comparative worthlessness of many of its parts, would preclude its publication as a whole. But complete treatises, or portions of treatises, have been translated by Burnouf, in his "Histoire du Buddhisme Indien," and "Lotus de la Bonne Loi;" by Beal, in his "Chinese Buddhist Scriptures;" by Schmidt, in "Der Weise und der Thor;" by Hardy, in his "Manual of Buddhism," and by Alabaster, in his "Modern Buddhist." An exact analysis of the contents of the hundred volumes of the great collection called the Kah-gyur is supplied by Csoma Körösi in the 20th vol. of the "Asiatic Researches." The leading features of the books, and parts of books thus translated, are so well marked and uniform, that nothing further is needed to enable us to estimate the general character of each division of the whole Tripitaka.

Gautama Buddha. Tradition tells us that immediately after that great Teacher had entered into Nirvana, his disciples assembled in council to collect his λόγια, and to fix the Canon of the Faith. This Canon consisted of three portions, and is therefore called the *Tripitaka*, or Three Baskets. Of these baskets, his disciple Upali was appointed to recall to memory, and edit, the one termed *Vinaya*, or the Buddha's instructions on discipline; Ananda (the intimate friend of Gautama), the Sutras, or practical teachings; and Kasyapa, the Abhiddharma, or metaphysical lectures. Into these three classes the Buddhist Canon remains still divided. But the text, as thus established, did not escape the necessity of further revision. One hundred and ten years after Sakyamuni's decease, certain monks brought considerable scandal on the Church by disregarding his precepts. To meet the difficulty, a council was held under the Buddhist king Asoka, the orthodox faith was determined, and a new edition of the Canonical Works compiled by 700 "accomplished priests." Divisions and heresies, however, could not be prevented. In Kanishka's reign, 400 years after Buddha, the Church was split up into eighteen sects, and a third council had to issue a third Revision of the Sacred Texts.[1]

All this is not to be taken as literally true. Especially is it impossible to accept the story that a Text of the Buddha's precepts and lectures was formed immediately after his death. It is probable that not even the earliest parts of the Tripitaka were committed to writing till long after that event, and it is quite certain that its later elements could not have been added

[1] Southern Buddhists fix the dates of these General Councils somewhat differently.

till some centuries after it. Nevertheless, there may be, and indeed it is almost beyond doubt that there are, some works in this Canon which were already current as the Word of Buddha in the time of Asoka, who reigned in the third century B.C. In an inscription quoted by Burnouf, and indisputably emanating from that monarch, it is stated that the law embraces the following topics:—"The limits marked by the Vinaya, the supernatural faculties of the Ariyas, the dangers of the future, the stanzas of the hermit, the Sutra of the hermit, the speculation of Upatisa (Sariputtra) only, the instruction of Laghula (Rahula), rejecting false doctrines. This," adds the proclamation, "is what has been said by the blessed Buddha."[1] In this enumeration we recognise, as Burnouf has observed, the classes Vinaya and Sutra, which still form two out of the three baskets, and we find also that certain texts were accepted by the Church as containing the genuine teaching of the Buddha. We must suppose, therefore, that at the epoch of the Council held under Asoka in B.C. 246, there were already many unquestioned works in circulation. Nor is there any reason to doubt that some of these have descended to our times. Burnouf divides the Sutras (in the more general sense of instructions or sermons) into two kinds: simple, and developed Sutras, of which the simple ones bear marks of antiquity and of fairly representing primitive Buddhism, while the developed Sutras contain the fanciful speculations of a later age.

Two most fortunate discoveries, the one made by Mr Hodgson in Nepaul, the other by Csoma Körösi

[1] Lotus, p. 725.

in Thibet, have placed the vast collection forming the Canon of Buddhism within the reach of European scholars. Brian Houghton Hodgson was the British Resident in Nepaul in the early part of the present century, and he there succeeded in obtaining a large number of volumes in Sanskrit which he presented to the Asiatic Societies of London and Paris. To the latter he presented first twenty-four works, and subsequently sixty-four MSS., being copies of works he had sent to the Asiatic Society in London. These books happily fell into the hands of one of the greatest of Sanskrit scholars, Eugène Burnouf, who, in his "History of Indian Buddhism," translated a sufficient number of them to serve as specimens. About the same time a zealous Hungarian, Csoma Körösi, undertook an adventurous journey into the heart of Asia, with a view of discovering the original stock of the Hungarian race. Failing in this object, he achieved another of greater value, that of unearthing the whole of the sacred books known in Thibet under the name of the *Kah-gyur*, or *Kan-gyur* (properly *bkah-hgyur*), which is the Thibetan translation, in one hundred volumes, of the very works of which Hodgson in Nepaul had discovered the Sanskrit originals. Such is the nature of our guarantees for the authenticity of the text.

Subdivision 1.—*The Vinaya-Pitaka.*

Let us proceed to consider in detail the division which stands first in the Buddhist classification, the Vinaya-Pitaka, or basketful of works on Discipline. These, according to Burnouf, are of very different

ages, some being, from the details they furnish with reference to Sâkyamuni, his institutions and his surroundings, of very ancient date, and others, which relate events that did not occur till two hundred years or more after his death, belonging to a more recent period. One of the most instructive of the legends which form the staple of the works on Discipline, is that of Pûrna. Only a brief abstract of it can be attempted here.

Bhagavat (that is, the Lord, or Buddha) was at Srâvasti, in the garden of Anâthapindika. (Anâthapindika was a householder who had embraced the religion of the Buddha, and in whose garden he was accustomed to preach.) There resided at this time in the town of Surparaka a very wealthy householder, named Bhava. This Bhava had three sons by his legitimate wife, who were christened respectively Bhavila, Bhavatrata, and Bhavanandin. After some years he fell into an illness which led to his using language of extraordinary violence. His wife with her three sons deserted him in consequence, but a young female slave, reflecting that he had immense wealth, and that it would not be suitable for her to desert him, remained in the house and nursed him throughout his malady. Seeing that he owed her his life, Bhava on his recovery told her that he would give her a reward. The young woman begged that if satisfied she might be admitted to her master's bed. Bhava endeavoured to get off, promising a handsome sum of money and her liberty instead, but the girl was determined, and obtained her wish. The result was that "after eight or nine months" she gave birth to a beautiful boy, to whom the name of Pûrna (the

Accomplished) was given. The infant Pûrna was confided to eight nurses, and subsequently received a first-rate education. In due time, the three elder sons were married by their father's desire, but the father, seeing them absorbed in mere uxoriousness, reproved their indolence, telling them that he had not been married until he had amassed a lac (100,000) of Suvarnas (a Suvarna representing about twenty-eight shillings). Struck by this reproof, the three sons went to sea on a mercantile expedition, and returned after having each made a lac of Suvarnas. But Pûrna, who had remained at home to manage the shop, was found to have gained an equal sum in the same time. Bhava, perceiving Pûrna's talents, impressed on his sons the importance of union, and the duty of disregarding what was said by their wives, women being the destroyers of family peace. He illustrated his remarks by a striking expedient. Having desired his sons to bring some wood, and to kindle it, he then ordered them all to withdraw the brands. This being done, the fire went out, and the moral was at once understood by the four young men. United, the fuel burns; and thus the union of brothers makes their strength. Bhavila in particular was warned by his father never to abandon Pûrna. In course of time Bhava died, and the three legitimate sons undertook another voyage. During their absence, the wives of the two younger sons fancied themselves ill-treated by Pûrna, who, in the midst of his business in the shop, did not supply their maids fast enough with all they sent for. On the return of their husbands, these two complained to them that they were treated as happens to those in whose family the son of a slave

exercises the command. The two brothers merely reflected that women sowed division in families. Unhappily, however, some trifling incidents, in which Bhavila's child appeared to have been treated by Pûrna with undue partiality, gave the sisters-in-law a more plausible pretext for their complaints. Such was the effect of their jealousy, that the younger brothers determined to demand a division of the property, in which Pûrna (as a slave) was to form one of the lots. Bhavila, as eldest brother, had first choice, and remembering his father's advice, chose Pûrna. One of the other brothers took the house and land, and ejected Bhavila's wife; the other took the shop and the property in foreign parts, and ejected Pûrna. Bhavila, his wife, and Pûrna, retired penniless to the house of a relative. The wife in distress sent out Pûrna with nothing but a brass coin, which had been attached to her dress, to buy provisions. Pûrna met a man who had picked up some stranded sandal-wood on the sea-shore, and buying it of him (on credit) for 500 Kârshâpanas, sold a portion of it again for 1000. With this sum he first paid the man who had sold the wood, and then obtained provisions for the household. He had still in his possession some pieces of the sandal-wood, which was of a very valuable species called Gosirsha. Shortly after this, the king fell ill, and his doctors having prescribed an unguent of this very wood, it was found that no one but Pûrna had any in his possession. Pûrna sold a piece of it to the Government at 1000 Kârshâpanas, and the king recovered. Hereupon he reflected that he was but a poor sort of king who had no Gosirsha sandal-wood in his establishment, and sent for Pûrna.

Pûrna, guessing his object, approached him with one piece in his hand, and three in his robe. The king, after ascertaining that the price of the one piece would be a lac of Suvarnas, inquired if there was more. Pûrna then showed him the three other pieces, and the king would have given him four lacs of Suvarnas. The wily merchant, however, offered to present him with one piece, and when the grateful monarch offered him a boon, requested that he might henceforth be protected against all insults, which was at once accorded.

About this time five hundred merchants arrived at Surparaka with a cargo of goods. The Merchants' Company passed a resolution that none of them should act independently of the rest in buying any of these goods; in short, that there should be no competition. Any one dealing with the merchants alone was to pay a fine. Pûrna, however, at once went to the vessel and bought the whole cargo at the price demanded, eighteen lacs of Suvarnas, paying the three lacs he had received as security. The Merchants' Company, finding themselves anticipated, seized Pûrna and exposed him to the sun to force him to pay the fine. No sooner was the king informed of this than he sent for the Merchants' Company to learn the cause of their proceedings. They told him; but being obliged to confess that they had never informed Pûrna or his brother of the resolution passed, they had to release him with shame. Fortune still favoured him. Soon after this, the king happened to require the very articles which Pûrna had purchased, and desired the Merchants' Company to purchase them. Pûrna hereupon sold them at double the price he had paid. His

next step was to undertake a sea-voyage for commercial purposes, and the first having been successful, it was followed by five others, all equally so. His seventh was undertaken at the instance of some Buddhist merchants from Srâvasti, where Gautama was teaching. During the voyage he was profoundly impressed with their religious demeanour. "These merchants, at night and at dawn, read aloud the hymns, the prayers which lead to the other shore, the texts which disclose the truth, the verses of the Sthaviras, those relating to the several sciences, and those of the hermits, as well as the Sûtras containing sections about temporal interests. Pûrna, who heard them, said to them, 'Gentlemen, what is that fine poetry which you sing?' 'It is not poetry, O prince of merchants; it is the very words of the Buddha.' Pûrna, who had never till now heard this name of Buddha mentioned, and who felt his hair stand up all over his body, inquired with deep respect, 'Gentlemen, who is he whom you call Buddha?' The merchants replied, 'The Sramana Gautama, descended from the Sâkya family, who having shaven his hair and beard, having put on garments of yellow hue, left his house with perfect faith to enter upon a religious life, and who has reached the supreme condition of an all-perfect Buddha; it is he, O prince of merchants, who is called the Buddha.' 'In what place, gentlemen, does he now reside?' 'At Srâvasti, O prince of merchants, in the wood of Jetavana, in the garden of Anâthapindika.'" The result of this conversation was that Pûrna, on his return, announced to his brother his intention of becoming a monk, and advised him never to go to sea, and never to live with his two

brothers. After this he went straight to Anâthapindika, and was by him presented to the Buddha, who received him with the remark that the most agreeable present he could have was a man to convert. Pûrna then received the investiture and tonsure by miracle, and was instructed in the law (in an abridged version) by his master. A beautiful, and very characteristic conversation follows the reception of the new doctrine. The Buddha inquired of Pûrna where he would now reside, and the latter (who intended to lead an ascetic life) replied that he would reside "in the land of the Sronaparantakas.[1] 'O Pûrna,' says Gautama, 'they are violent, these men of Sronaparanta: they are passionate, cruel, angry, furious, and insolent. When the men of Sronaparanta, O Pûrna, shall address thee to thy face in wicked, coarse, and insulting language, when they shall become enraged against thee and rail at thee, what wilt thou think of that?' 'If the men of Sronaparanta, O Lord, address me to my face in wicked, coarse, and insulting language, if they become enraged against me and rail at me, this is what I shall think of that: They are certainly good men, these Sronaparantakas, they are gentle, mild men, they who address me to my face, in wicked, coarse and insulting language, they who become enraged against me and rail at me, but who neither strike me with the hand nor stone me.'" The rest must be given in an abridged form. "But if they do strike thee with the hand or stone thee?" "I shall think them good and gentle for not striking me with swords or sticks."

[1] Apparently a people living beyond the frontiers (of the civilised world). See H. B. I., p. 252, *n.*

"And if they do that?" "I shall think them good and gentle for not depriving me entirely of life." "And if they do that?"[1] "If the men of Sronaparanta, O Lord, deprive me entirely of life, this is what I shall think: There are hearers of Bhagavat [the Lord] who by reason of this body full of ordure, are tormented, covered with confusion, despised, struck with swords, who take poison, who die of hanging, who are thrown down precipices. They are certainly good people, these Sronaparantakas, they are gentle people, they who deliver me with so little pain from this body full of ordure." "Good, good, Pûrna; thou canst, with the perfection of patience with which thou art endowed, yes, thou canst live; thou canst take up thy abode in the land of the Sronaparantakas. Go, Pûrna; delivered thyself, deliver; arrived thyself at the other shore, cause others to arrive there; consoled thyself, console; having come thyself to complete Nirvâna, cause others to arrive there."

Hereupon Pûrna took his way to Sronaparanta, where he converted a huntsman who had intended to kill him, and obtained five hundred novices composed of both sexes.

After a time, Bhavila, his brother, was requested by Bhavatrata and Bhavanandin to enter into partnership with them; and his repugnance to the proposal was overcome by the reproaches of his younger brothers, who said that he would never have dared to go to sea as Pûrna had done. Stung by this taunt, he engaged with them in a sea-voyage. The vessel was attacked by a furious storm, raised by a demon in consequence of the merchants having cut

[1] What follows is literal.

some sandal-wood which was under this demon's protection. Bhavila stood dumbfounded; and when the passengers inquired the reason, informed them that he was thinking of his brother's advice never to go to sea. It turned out that the merchants on board knew of Pûrna's great sanctity, and they addressed their prayers to him. He came through the air, after the manner of Buddhist ascetics, appeared sitting cross-legged over the vessel, and allayed the tempest. The vessel, loaded with sandal-wood, was brought safely back to Surparaka. The sandal-wood Pûrna took possession of in order to make a palace for the Buddha, and desired his brothers to invite that personage and his disciples to a repast. The invitation was miraculously conveyed to the Buddha (who was a long way off, at Srâvasti), and he told his followers to prepare to accept it. Pûrna returned suddenly to the Assembly (around Buddha) and performed a miracle. The king of Surparaka, on his side, made preparations on the grandest scale for the reception of the Buddhist hierarchy, which came to his city by all kinds of supernatural means. Pûrna, standing by him, explained the various prodigies as they occurred. Omitting some marvellous conversions wrought by the Buddha on his way, it may be mentioned that he descended into the middle of the town of Surparaka from the air, and there taught the law, by which hundreds of thousands of living beings attained the several degrees of knowledge which lead, sooner or later, to salvation.

Passing over a passage in which two royal Nâgas (or serpent-kings) make their appearance to receive

the law, and another in which Gautama proceeds to another universe to instruct the mother of his disciple Maudgalyâyana, we arrive at the moral which always forms the conclusion of these Buddhist tales. The monks surrounding the Buddha inquired what actions Pûrna had performed in order, first, to be born in a rich family; secondly, to be the son of a slave; and lastly, "when he had entered on a religious life, to behold the condition of an Arhat[1] face to face, after having annihilated all the corruptions of evil?" Buddha replied, that in the very age in which we live, but at a period of it when men lived 20,000 years, there was a venerable Tathâgata, or Buddha, named Kâsyapa, who resided near Benares. Pûrna, who had adopted a religious life under him, "fulfilled among the members of the Church[2] the duties of servant of the law." The servant of a certain Arhat set himself to sweep the monastery, but the wind blowing the dirt from side to side, he gave up the attempt, intending to proceed when the wind should have abated. The servant of the law coming in, and finding the monastery unswept, allowed himself to be carried away by rage, and to utter these offensive words: "This is the servant of some slave's son." When he had had time to recover his calmness, the Arhat's servant presented himself, and asked if he knew him. The servant of

[1] The state of an "Arhat" is the highest of four degrees which the hearers of the Buddha used to attain; *i.e.*, the one which led most directly to Nirvana. The other three degrees were those of Srotâpatti, of Sakridágámin, and Anágámin. The Arhat was not born again; each of the other three had a smaller or greater number of existences to undergo before Nirvána.

[2] I translate "l'Assemblée" by this phrase, which appears to render its meaning more precisely than a more literal translation.

the law replied that he did, and that they both had entered into a religious life under the Buddha Kâsyapa. The other rejoined that while he had fulfilled all his duties, the servant of the law had been guilty of a fault in giving way to his temper, and exhorted him to diminish that fault by confession. The latter repented, and was thereby saved from re-birth in hell; but he was doomed to be re-born for five hundred generations in the womb of a slave. In this last existence he was still the offspring of a slave; but because he had formerly served the members of the Church, he was born in a rich and prosperous family; and because he had formerly read and studied Buddhist theology, he now became an Arhat under Gautama Buddha, after annihilating evil.[1]

Such is a favourable specimen of a vast number of legends contained in the Buddhist Canon. The following fragment is of a rather different kind. It illustrates the extravagant adoration paid to the person of Buddha some generations after his death. A king named Rudrayana had sent to another, named Bimbisâra, an armour of marvellous properties and priceless value. Bimbisâra, at a loss what present he could send back which would be a fitting return for such a gift, determined to seek out Buddha and consult him on the point:—

"King Bimbisâra addressed him thus:—'In the town of Rôruka, Lord, there lives a king called Rudrayana; he is my friend; though I have never seen him, he has sent me a present of an armour composed of five pieces. What present shall I give him in return?' 'Have the representation of the Tathâgata traced on a bit of stuff,' answered Bhagavat, 'and send it him as a present.'

[1] H. B. I., p. 235 ff.

"Bimbisâra sent for some painters, and said—'Paint on a bit of stuff the image of the Tathâgata.' The blessed Buddhas are not very easy to get at, which is the reason why the painters could find no opportunity of [painting] Bhagavat. So they said to Bimbisâra—'If the king would give a feast to Bhagavat in the interior of his palace, it would be possible for us to seize the occasion of [painting] the blessed one. King Bimbisâra having accordingly invited Bhagavat to his palace, gave him a feast. The blessed Buddhas are beings that people are never weary of looking at. Whichever limb of Bhagavat the painters looked at they could not leave off contemplating it. So they could not seize the moment to paint him. Bhagavat then said to the king —'The painters will have trouble, O great king; it is impossible for them to seize the moment to [paint the] Tathâgata, but bring the canvass.' The king having brought it, Bhagavat projected his shadow on it, and said to the painters—'Fill that outline with colours: and then write over it the formulas of refuge as well as the precepts of instruction; you will have to trace both in the direct order, and in the inverse order the production of the [successive] causes [of existence], which is composed of twelve terms; and on it will be written these two verses:

"'Begin, go out [of the house]; apply yourself to the law of Buddha; annihilate the army of death, as an elephant upsets a hut of reeds.

"'He who shall walk without distraction under the discipline of this law, escaping birth and the revolution of the world, will put an end to sorrow.[1]

"'If any one asks what these verses are, you must answer: The first is the introduction; the second, the instruction; the third, the revolution of the world; and the fourth, the effort.'"[2]

Bimbisâra, acting under Bhagavat's dictation, then wrote to Rudrayana that he was about to send him the most precious object in the three worlds, and that he must adorn the way by which it would arrive for two and a half yojanas. Rudrayana was rather

[1] These two verses are a standing formula by which the Buddha of the Canon summons the world to receive his law.

[2] H. B. I., p. 341.

irritated by this message, and proposed immediate war, but was dissuaded by his ministers. The picture therefore was received with all honour, and not uncovered till after it had been duly adored. Certain foreign merchants who happened to be on the spot, on seeing the portrait, cried out altogether: "Adoration to Buddha." At this name the king felt his hair stand on end, and inquired who Buddha was. His position, and the meaning of the inscription, was explained to him by the merchants. The consequence, as may be supposed, was his conversion to Buddhism. He reflected on the causes of existence, and attained the degree of Srotâpatti.[1]

Very little allusion is made in these legends to the immediate subject of the Vinaya-pitaka, namely, Discipline. But a reference to Csoma's Analysis of the Dulva (the Tibetan title for the Vinaya) will show that it is in fact largely occupied in laying down rules for the guidance of monks and nuns, these rules being frequently supposed to have arisen out of particular events, while "moral tales" are freely intermingled with the treatment of the main business. The haphazard manner in which the regulations needful for the government of the Church were framed—according to the theory of the Scriptures—may be illustrated by a few specimens. Thus, two persons in debt had taken orders. "Shakya (Sâkyamuni) prohibits the admission into the religious order of any one who is in debt."[2] This rule entirely agrees with the general spirit of Gautama's proceedings, as narrated in the Buddhist books, and we are warranted in supposing that statements so harmonious rest on a historical

[1] H. B. I., p.

[2] As. Re., vol. xx. p. 53.

foundation. Thus, he is said to have refused to admit young people without the consent of their parents, or servants of a king without their royal master's sanction. Regulations like these may well have been made by Buddha from a cautious anxiety to avoid all conflict with established authorities. Further on in the same volume of the Dulva the reception of hermaphrodites is likewise prohibited.[1] On another occasion, leave is given to learn swimming. "Indecencies," are then "committed in the Ajirapati river. They are prohibited from touching any woman;—they may not save even one that has fallen into the river."[2] Elsewhere we are told of a pious lady who provided the infant community with cloth to make bathing clothes, since she had heard that both monks and nuns bathed without any garments.[3] A little further on, the dress of the priesthood is prescribed. Some of the disciples wished to wear one thing, and some another; others to go naked. "Shakya tells them the impropriety and indecency of the latter, and prohibits it absolutely; and rebuking them, adds that such a garb, or to go naked, is the characteristic sign of a *Mu-stegs-chan* (Sansk. *Tîrthika*)."[4] Here again we seem to have a historical trait, for it was one of the distinctive features of Buddhism that its votaries were never naked, like the Tîrthikas, or heretical ascetics, but always wore the yellow robe. In other places there are rules on lodging, on bedding, on the treatment of quarrelsome priests, the use of fragrant substances, and many other trivial points of ecclesiastical discipline. The volumes containing all these instructions are followed

[1] As. Re., vol. xx. p. 55.
[2] Ibid., vol. xx. p. 59.
[3] Ibid., vol. xx. p. 70.
[4] Ibid., vol xx. p. 71.

by one in which the same stories are told, and the same morals deduced from them, concerning the nuns. Then there are some injunctions apparently peculiar to this sex, as, for instance, the restraint imposed on their possession of a multiplicity of garments. Another prohibition was called forth by the following conduct of a nun. A king had sent a piece of fine linen cloth as a present to a brother king. "It comes afterwards into the hands of *G*tsug-*D*gah-Mo (a lewd or wicked priestess); she puts it on, appears in public, but from its thin texture, seems to be naked. The priestesses are prohibited from accepting or wearing such thin clothes."[1]

It will be observed from these few quotations that according to the Canon the Buddha's usual mode of proceeding was to lay down rules as occasion required. Some instructive anecdote is related, and the new order follows as a natural consequence of the event. More probably the rules were in fact made first, and the anecdotes subsequently composed to account for them. However this may be, there exist in the Canon some undoubtedly ancient ordinances not called forth by any special circumstances, conformity to which was required of the monks, if not by their founder himself, at least by the rulers of his Church in its most primitive condition. Such, for example, are "the thirteen rules by which sin is shaken," reported by Burnouf, which are also found, with the exception of a single one, in a Chinese work entitled "the sacred book of the twelve observances."[2] These rules belong, according to Burnouf, to an epoch when the organisation of the monks under a powerful

[1] As. Re., vol. xx. p. 85. [2] H. B. I., p. 304.

hierarchy, and their residence in settled monasteries, had scarcely begun. Some of them are even inconsistent with the institution of such monasteries, or Viharas, which are nevertheless very ancient. The fact that the above-named Chinese treatise, the pentaglot Buddhist Vocabulary,[1] and a list current among the Singhalese, all contain these articles of discipline (though with slight variations) proves, moreover, that they appertain to that common fund on which Northern and Southern Buddhists drew alike. The first article (following the order in the Vocabulary) signifies "wearing rags found in the dust," and refers to an injunction addressed to the monks to wear vestments composed of rags picked up in heaps of ordure, in cemeteries, and such places. The second, "he who has three garments," corresponds to an order found in the Chinese book forbidding monks to have more than three garments. Of the third article, which is corrupt, Burnouf can give no satisfactory explanation; and the fourth means "he who lives by alms," a practice at all times imposed on the monastic orders. Fifthly, the ascetic is described as "he who has but one seat;" sixthly, as "one who eats no sweatmeats after his meal," all eating for the day having to be finished by noon. Seventhly, he "lives in the forest," that is, in lonely places; and eighthly, he is "near a tree," the Chinese injunction requiring him to sit near a tree, and to seek no other shelter. The ninth order obliges them to sit on the ground, that is, to live in the open air; the tenth, to dwell among tombs, which

[1] This Vocabulary is a Chinese compilation, forming one of a class of catalogues drawn up in ancient times by Buddhist preachers. Such catalogues are found in the midst of canonical books, and are of high authority among Buddhists.

the Singhalese interpret as an order to visit cemeteries and meditate on the instability of human affairs; the eleventh, to sit, and not to lie down. Of the meaning of the twelfth there is some doubt; it may signify that the monk is to remain where he is, or that he is not to change the position of his mat when once laid down. To these twelve the Singhalese add a thirteenth article, that the monk is to live by begging from house to house.

Not less remarkable are the ten commandments of Buddhism, which are doubtless also of considerable antiquity. Burnouf states that he has found them in the sequel of the Prâtimoksha Sûtra in the Pali-Burman copy of that most important work (to which reference will shortly be made). These are the ten commandments as given in that authority :—

1. Not to kill any living creature.
2. Not to steal.
3. Not to break the vow of chastity.
4. Not to lie.
5. Not to drink intoxicating liquors.
6. Not to take a meal except at the appointed time.
7. Not to visit dances, performances of vocal or instrumental music, or dramatic representations.
8. Not to wear garlands, or use perfumes and unguents.
9. Not to sleep on a high or large bed.
10. Not to accept gold or silver.[1]

Of these commandments, some are evidently general, being founded on the fundamental principles of ethics; others are addressed only to those in orders. Such is the case with the last five, all of which bear reference to certain disciplinary laws imposed upon the monks and nuns. Their object is to prohibit

[1] Lotus, p. 444.

luxury of various kinds, such as the use of a large bed, and to restrain the love of sensual enjoyments, such as plays, music, and dancing. Another list of offences, after enumerating the first five of those contained in the preceding list, adds five more, namely :—

1. Blasphemy of the Buddha.
2. Blasphemy of the Law.
3. Blasphemy of the Church.
4. Heresy.
5. Violation of a nun.[1]

Such are the leading points of monastic discipline among the primitive Buddhists. A more elaborate and formal treatise on the subject of the sins to be avoided, and the penalties to be imposed on their commission, is the Prâtimoksha Sûtra, or Sûtra on Emancipation. It is the standard work on this subject, and should be recited before the assembled Vihâra twice in each month, any guilty brother confessing any transgression of its precepts of which he might be conscious. Its antiquity is undoubted, for in a Sûtra known to have been brought to China from India in A.D. 70 (and therefore already of established repute) the Prâtimoksha is referred to as the "250 rules."[2] It does, in fact, contain 250 rules in its Chinese form, while the Thibetan version contains 253, and the Pali version but 227.[3] While the Prâtimoksha Sûtra now to be quoted is destined for monks, or Bhikshus, it is to be noted that there exists likewise a "Bhikshunî Prâtimoksha Sûtra," or Treatise on Emancipation for Nuns.[4] The rules are, *mutatis mutandis*, the same for both sexes.

[1] Lotus, p. 445.
[2] C. B. S., p. 189.
[3] H. B. I., p. 303.
[4] As. Re., vol. xx. pp. 79. 84.

It will be interesting to glance rapidly at the nature of the faults and crimes the confession of which is here imposed on Bhikshus and Bhikshunîs.[1]

The Sûtra opens with certain stanzas designed to celebrate the Buddhist Trinity,—the Buddha, the Law, and the Church. Then follow some "preparatory questions:"—

"Are the priests assembled? (They are.) Are all things arranged? (seats, water, sweeping, &c.) (They are.) Let all depart who are not ordained. (If any, let them go; if none are present, let one say so.) Does any Bhikshu here present ask for absolution? (Let him answer accordingly.) Exhortation must be given to the priestesses (but if there are none present, let one say so). Are we agreed what our present business is? It is to repeat the precepts in this lawful assembly.

"Venerable brethren, attend now! On this . . . . day of the month . . . . let the assembled priests listen attentively and patiently, whilst the precepts are distinctly recited.

COMMENCEMENT.

"Brethren! I desire to go through the Prâtimoksha. Bhikshus! assembled thus, let all consider and devoutly reflect on these precepts. If any have transgressed, let him repent! If none have transgressed, then stand silent! silent! Thus, brethren, it shall be known that ye are guiltless.

"Now if a stranger ask one of us a question we are bound to reply truthfully: so, also, Bhikshus, we who reside in community, if we know that we have done wrong, and yet decline to acknowledge it, we are guilty of prevarication. But Buddha has declared that prevarication effectually prevents our religious advancement. That brother, therefore, who is conscious of transgression, and desires absolution, ought at once to declare his fault, and after proper penance he shall have rest and peace.

"Brethren! having repeated this preface, I demand of you all

[1] The translation of this Sûtra is due to Mr Beal, to whose most useful labours on Buddhism I am much indebted.—C. B. S., p. 206.

—Is this assembly pure or not? (Repeat this three times.) Brethren! this assembly is pure; silent! silent! ye stand! So let it be! Brethren, I now proceed to recite the four parajika laws, ordered to be recited twice every month."

These four laws are then repeated, and the penalty of excommunication, which attaches to a breach of any one of them, is enunciated. The first of the four prohibits impure conduct; the second, theft. The third runs as follows:—

"If a Bhikshu cause a man's death, or hold a weapon and give it a man (for the purpose), or if he speak of the advantages of death, or if he ceaselessly exhort one to meet death (saying), 'Tush, you are a brave man,' or use such wicked speech as this, 'It is far better to die and not to live,' using such considerations as these, bringing every sort of expedient into use, praising death, exhorting to death: this Bhikshu ought to be excluded and cut off."

The fourth rule is against pretending to a perfect knowledge of the Truth which the Bhikshu does not in fact possess.

At the end of the recitation of these four rules it is declared that a brother who has transgressed any one of them "has acquired the guilt which demands exclusion, and ought not to live as a member of the priesthood." The question as to the purity of the Assembly is then again put, and the priest (after declaring it pure) proceeds to thirteen rules, the breach of which is punished by suspension. The first restrains a monk from pampering lustful thoughts, the second from bringing any part of his body into contact with that of a woman, the third from lewd talk with a woman, the fourth from obtaining a woman to minister to him. For a violation of this

last injunction the highest penance, as well as suspension, is appointed. There follow rules against building a residence of illegal size, or without due consecration, or on an inconvenient site; against building a Vihâra on an inconvenient site; against slander of a Bhikshu (two rules), against causing disunion in a community, against forming a cabal for mutual protection against just censure, against disorderly conduct when living in a house, against a refusal to listen to expostulation or reproof. Solitary confinement, and six days of penance, are the penalties imposed on these offences; after the infliction of the sentence absolution is to be given. Next we have two rules "not capable of exact definition," but relating to licentious talk with "a faithful laywoman." Thirty rules relating to priests' robes and the like matters are now recited. They seem to be aimed at covetousness in receiving or asking gifts. After the usual inquiry as to the purity of the brethren, ninety rules against offences requiring "confession and absolution" are to be read. Some of these seem to be repetitions of previous ones belonging to a more serious category, as the first two, on lying and slander, and the eighth, against pretended knowledge. Then the Prâtimoksha proceeds to say that if a Bhikshu use hypocritical language, if he occupy the same lodging as a woman, or the same as a man not yet ordained above two nights, if he chant prayers with a man not yet ordained, if he rail at a priest, if he use water containing insects (so as to destroy life), if he give clothes to a Bhikshunî, or nun, if he go with a Bhikshunî in any boat except a ferry-boat, if he agree to walk with a Bhikshunî along the road, if he gambol in the water while bathing, if he drink

distilled or fermented liquor, or commit any of the many other faults, partly against morality in general, partly against conventual rule, he is guilty of a transgression of this class. Four rules follow against receiving food from a nun, against allowing a nun in a layman's house to point out certain dishes, and have them given to certain monks; against going to dinner uninvited; against the omission on the part of a monk residing in a dangerous place to warn those who may bring him victuals of the risk they run. A hundred rules, mostly trifling, are now entered on. They are such as these: "Not to enter a layman's house in a bouncing manner." "Not to munch or make a munching noise in eating rice," and likewise, "not to make a lapping noise." "Not to clean the teeth under a pagoda;" with many other minute regulations on a multitude of trivial points. The seven concluding laws refer simply to the mode of deciding cases.

SUBDIVISION 2.—*The Sûtra-Pitaka.*

We have thus concluded our notice of the Prâtimoksha Sûtra, and may pass on to the Sûtra-pitaka, the second of the three baskets into which the Canon is divided. Sûtra is a term signifying a discourse, or lecture, and the Sûtras of Buddhism are frequently moral stories, supposed to emanate from Gautama Buddha himself, and embodying the great features of his gospel, as the Sermon on the Mount and the Parables do those of the gospel of Jesus. A very interesting collection of such stories belonging to the Sûtra-pitaka is contained in a work translated from the Thibetan by a Russian scholar, and forming,

under the title of the *H*dsangs-*b*lun, or the Wise Man and the Fool, a portion of the 28th volume of the *M*do, or Sûtra-pitaka. From Csoma's Analysis it appears that many other narratives of a similar nature are embodied in this section of the Canon, though much of it also consists of more direct dogmatic instruction. From "The Wise Man and the Fool" I select a chapter which affords a good illustration of the boundless charity which Buddhism inculcates.

The victoriously-perfect One was living at Srâvasti. When the time came to receive alms, he set out with his disciple Ânanda, alms-bowl in hand, along the road. It so happened that he met two men who had been condemned to death for repeated robberies, and were being led to execution. Their mother, seeing the Buddha, thus addressed him:—"O chief of gods, think of us with mercy, and vouchsafe to take under thy protection these my sons who are going to execution." Buddha accordingly interceded with the king, who gave them a free pardon. Touched with gratitude, the two men asked leave to become monks, and on Buddha's consenting to receive them, their hair at once fell off from head and face, and their garments assumed the yellow hue of the order.[1] Both mother and sons attained high spiritual grades. Ânanda marvelled what good deed these three could have performed to meet with the victoriously-perfect One, to be saved from such great evils, and to obtain the prospect of Nirvâna. Buddha thereupon informed him that this was not the first occasion on which he had saved their lives, and on Ânanda's request for a

[1] This is a standing miracle on the reception of novices by Buddha.

further explanation, related the following circumstances. Countless ages ago, there lived in Jambudwîpa (India) a certain king who had three sons. The youngest son was mild and merciful from his childhood upwards. One day, when the king, with his ministers, wives and sons, was at a picnic outside the town, the three sons went into a wood, where they found a tigress, with young recently littered, so nearly starved that she was almost on the point of devouring her own brood. The youngest asked his brothers what food a tigress would eat. "Newly-killed meat and warm blood." "Is there any one who would support its life with his own body?" "No one," replied the elder brothers; "that would be too difficult."[1] Then the youngest prince thought within himself: "For a long time I have been driven about in the circle of births, and have thrown away my body and my life innumerable times; often have I sacrificed it for the passion of the desires, often for that of rage, often too for folly and ignorance; what value then has this body, which has not one single time trodden the field of meritorious actions for the sake of religion!" Meantime, all three had walked on; but the youngest, pleading some business of his own, desired them to go on, leaving him to follow. Having returned to the cave of the tigress, he laid himself down beside her, but found her too weak to open her mouth. Hereupon the prince contrived to bleed himself with a sharp splinter of wood, and the tigress, after licking the blood that flowed from him, was sufficiently refreshed to consume him altogether. The two elder

[1] I give only the substance of this colloquy.

brothers, wondering at his long absence, returned to the tiger's hole, where, on finding his remains, they rolled upon the ground and fainted, overcome with grief. The queen, who had had an alarming dream, questioned them anxiously on their return as to their brother, and she too on learning the sad event, which their choking voices for some time prevented them from telling, fell senseless to the ground. Soon after, both king and queen visited the den, but could find nothing but bones. Meantime, the prince had been born again in the Tushita heaven. Looking about to discover what good action of his had brought him to this place, he saw the bones of his former body in the tigress's den, and his parents sighing and groaning around them. He returned from his heavenly abode to give them some consolation and some good advice. They were at length somewhat comforted, and collecting his bones, buried them in a costly sarcophagus.

Buddha then turns to Ânanda and asks him whom he supposes the actors in this tragedy to have been. He tells him, without waiting for an answer, that the king was his present father, the queen his present mother, the elder princes certain personages named Maitreya and Vasumitra, and the youngest prince no other than himself. The young tigers were, it need hardly be said, the condemned felons whom he had now again delivered from death.

While this anecdote inculcates charity in its fullest extent, the one which is now to be quoted illustrates another most conspicuous point in the ethics of Buddhism,—the regard paid by it to personal purity and the deadening influence it exercised on the

senses. The translation of this curious legend is due to Burnouf:—

"There was at Mathurâ a courtesan called Vâsavadattâ. Her maid went one day to Upagupta to buy her some perfumes. Vâsavadattâ said to her on her return: 'It seems, my dear, that this perfumer pleases you, as you always buy from him.' The maid answered her: 'Daughter of my master, Upagupta, the son of the merchant, who is gifted with beauty, with talent, and with gentleness, passes his life in the observance of the law.' On hearing these words Vâsavadattâ conceived an affection for Upagupta, and at last she sent her maid to say to him: 'My intention is to go and find you; I wish to enjoy myself with you.' The maid delivered her message to Upagupta; but the young man told her to answer her mistress: 'My sister, it is not yet time for you to see me.' Now it was necessary in order to obtain the favours of Vâsavadattâ to give five hundred Purânas. Thus the courtesan imagined that [if he refused her, it was because] he could not give the five hundred Purânas. For this reason, she sent her maid to him again to say, 'I do not ask a single Kârchâpana from the son of my master; I only wish to enjoy myself with him.' The maid again delivered this new message, and Upagupta answered her in the same way: 'My sister, it is not time yet for you to see me.'

"However, the son of a master-workman had come to settle with Vâsavadattâ, when a merchant, who was bringing from the north five hundred horses which he wished to sell, came to the town of Mathurâ, and asked who was the most beautiful courtesan. He was answered that Vâsavadattâ was. Immediately, taking 500 Purânas and a great number of presents, he went to the courtesan. Then Vâsavadattâ, urged by covetousness, assassinated the son of the master-workman, who was at her house, threw his body into the middle of the filth of the town, and gave herself up to the merchant. After some days, the young man was extricated from the filth by his parents, who denounced the murder. The king at once gave orders to the executioners to go and cut off Vâsavadattâ's hands, feet, ears, and nose, and to leave her in the cemetery. The executioners carried out the orders of the king, and left the courtesan in the place named.

"Now Upagupta heard of the punishment that had been inflicted

on Vâsavadattâ, and at once this idea came into his mind: 'Some time ago, this woman wished to see me for a sensual object, and I did not consent that she should see me. But now that her hands and feet, ears and nose, have been cut off, it is time she should see me,' and he pronounced these verses:

"'When her body was covered with beautiful attire, when she shone with ornaments of different sorts, the best thing for those who aspired to deliverance and who wished to escape the law of renewed birth was not to go and see this woman.

"'To-day, when she has lost her pride, her love and her joy, when she has been mutilated by the edge of the knife, when her body is reduced to its true nature, it is time to see her.'

"Then sheltered by a parasol carried by a young man who accompanied him as a servant, he went to the cemetery with a measured step. Vâsavadattâ's maid had stayed with her mistress out of gratitude for her past kindness, and she prevented the crows from approaching her body. [Seeing Upagupta] she said to her: 'Daughter of my master, he to whom you sent me several times, Upagupta, is coming this way. No doubt he comes attracted by the desire for pleasure.' But Vâsavadattâ, hearing these words, answered:

"'When he sees me deprived of beauty, racked with grief, lying on the ground all covered with blood, how can he feel love of pleasure?'

"Then she said to her maid: 'Friend, pick up the limbs that have been severed from my body.' The maid picked them up at once, and hid them under a bit of linen. At this moment Upagupta arrived, and he stood up before Vâsavadattâ. The courtesan, seeing him standing up before her, said to him: 'Son of my master, when my body was whole, when it was made for enjoyment, I several times sent my maid to you, and you answered me: "My sister, it is not time for you to see me." To-day, when the knife has carried off my hands and feet, my ears and nose, when I am thrown in the dirt and in blood, why do you come?' And she uttered the following verses:

"'When my body was soft like the lotus-flower, when it was adorned with ornaments and rich clothes, when it had all which attracted the eye, I was so unhappy as not to see you.

"'To-day why do you come to contemplate a body, the sight of

which the eyes cannot bear, which games, pleasure, joy, and beauty have abandoned, which inspires horror, and is stained with blood and dirt?'

"Upagupta answered her: 'I have not come to you, my sister, attracted by the love of pleasure; but I am come to see the real nature of the miserable objects of the enjoyments of man.'"[1]

Such is the character of the more ancient portions of the Sûtra-pitaka. It consists largely of tales, most of which have much the same outward form, the details only being varied; and all of which are intended to impress some kind of moral upon their hearers. But the Sûtra collection is composed of two different classes of works, the one class being named by Burnouf simple Sûtras, the other developed Sûtras. The developed Sûtras belong, according to the same authority, to a much later period, and are marked off from the simple Sûtras by certain well-defined characters. They are indeed of a kind which absolutely precludes the notion that they can emanate in any way whatever from Sâkyamuni, or that they could have been composed during the modest beginnings of his Church, when his followers were rather intent on practical goodness than on pompous and high-flown descriptions of their Master's magnificence. Not that all the Sûtras classed by Burnouf as simple must needs belong to a very early age; but that the developed Sûtras certainly could not have been written until some centuries after Sâkyamuni's death, when his disciples, instead of using their voices in actual conversation, enjoyed the leisure and the means to employ their pens in attempted fine writing. Burnouf has given the public a single specimen of a

[1] H. B. I., p. 146 ff.

Sûtra of this class, and they must be very devoted students of Oriental literature who wish for another. Here is a sample of its style:—

"Then the Bodhisattva Mahâsattva Akshayamati having risen from his seat, after throwing his upper garment over his shoulder, and placing his right knee on the ground, directing his joined hands, in token of respect, to the quarter where Bhagavat was, addressed him in these words: 'Why, O Bhagavat, does the Bodhisattva Mahâsattva Avalokitesvara bear that name?' This having been said, Bhagavat spoke thus to the Bodhisattva Akshayamati: 'O son of a family, all the hundreds of thousands of myriads of creatures existing in the world who suffer pains, have but to hear the name of the Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara to be delivered from this mass of pains.'"[1]

The extraordinary diffuseness of this kind of composition is scarcely credible. Not only is every doctrine elaborated in the utmost number of words possible, but its exposition in prose is regularly followed by a second exposition in verse. Add to this peculiar feature of developed Sûtras another, namely, that innumerable crowds of supernatural auditors (especially Bodhisattvas, or future Buddhas) are present at their delivery by the Buddha, and take part in the dialogue, or demand explanations on knotty points, and some conception may be formed of their wholly unreal and unnatural character. Thus, the Lotus concludes with the statement that innumerable Tathâgatas (Buddhas) come from other universes, seated on thrones near diamond trees, innumerable Bodhisattvas, and the whole of the four assemblies of

[1] Lotus, p. 261.

the universe, with Devas (gods), men, Asuras, and Gandharvas, transported with joy, praised what Bhagavat had said. Although the simple Sûtras mention the presence of gods at the Buddha's teaching, yet they do not (so far as I am aware) introduce these hosts of Bodhisattvas and Buddhas belonging to other worlds than ours. Their horizon had not extended itself to such vast limits, and they confined themselves to the universe in which we live.

SUBDIVISION 3.—*The Abhidharma-pitaka.*

A third section of the Canon remains, the Abhidharma, or Metaphysics. Buddhist metaphysics are so absolutely mystical that it would be a waste of time to enlarge upon them in a work not specially consecrated to Oriental subjects. The subtleties of the Indian mind would require far more space to explain than would be consistent with the objects in view here, even if the writer were competent to explain them. The impression left on the mind by the perusal of the Abhidharma is that we delude ourselves if we believe in the reality of anything whatever. There is no material world; all we see, hear, feel, or believe, is illusion; our thoughts themselves are no-thoughts: this doctrine is that of wisdom and truth, but there is no wisdom and no truth. The Buddha arrives by his meditations at this sublime knowledge; but there is no meditation and no knowledge. He conducts living creatures to Nirvâna; but there are neither creatures to be conducted, nor a Buddha to conduct them. All is nothingness, and nothingness is all. That this nihilism is common to all the schools

into which Buddhists are divided, I do not mean to assert. There are in Nepaul certain schools which hold a peculiar modification of theism, and they probably may not embrace these strange and unintelligible systems. But the views—if views they can be called—which have just been described, do mark the canonical books of the Abhidharma with which I am acquainted; such as the so-called Pradjnâ Pâramitâ, or Perfection of Wisdom. There is, however, one metaphysical theory which is not a mere series of contradictions, and which, from its close connection with the deepest roots of the Buddhistic faith, deserves more than a mere cursory mention. It is the dogma known as that of the twelve Nidânas, or successive causes of existence.

It has already been explained that the original aim of Buddhism—the salvation offered by Sakyamuni—was deliverance from this painful existence. The four truths which formed the foundation of his system have also been spoken of. It may be well to remind the reader that they are these:—1. The existence of Pain; 2. The production of Pain; 3. The annihilation of Pain; 4. The way to the annihilation of Pain. Now if existence was, as the Buddhists believed, the source of pain, it was important to discover the source of existence. This the theory of the Nidânas professes to do. It is therefore not only intimately related to the four great truths, but forms an essential supplement to them. A very ancient formula, discovered not only in books but on images, declares that, "Of all things proceeding from cause, the cause of their procession hath the Tathagata explained. The great Sramana has like-

wise declared the cause of the extinction of all things." Whether this formula refers to the four truths, or to the Nidânas, it is impossible to say. The Nidânas, however, might well be referred to in these terms. They are described in a passage which Burnouf has quoted from the Lalitavistara, in which the Bodhisattva (afterwards Buddha) is stated to have risen through prolonged meditation from the knowledge of each successive consequent to that of its antecedent. The Bodhisattva, we are told, collected his thoughts, and fixed his intelligence in the last watch of night, just before the dawn appeared. "Then this thought came into his mind: The existence of this world, which is born, grows old, dies, falls, and is born again, is certainly an evil. But he could not recognise the means of quitting this world, which is nothing but a great accumulation of sorrows, which is composed but of decrepitude, illnesses, death, and other miseries, which is altogether formed of them.

"This reflection brought the following thought into his mind: What is the thing the existence of which leads to decrepitude and death, and what cause have decrepitude and death? This reflection came into his mind: Birth existing, decrepitude and death exist; for decrepitude and death have birth as their cause."

A similar process of reasoning led him to see that the cause of birth was existence; that of existence, conception; that of conception, desire; that of desire, sensation; that of sensation, contact; that of contact, the six seats of sensible qualities; that of the six seats, name and form; that of name and form, knowledge; that of knowledge, the concepts; that of the concepts, ignorance. "It is thus," exclaims the

Bodhisattva when this great light had burst upon him, "it is thus that the production of this world, which is but a mass of sorrows, takes place." And by an inverse process he went on to reflect that if ignorance did not exist, neither would the concepts, and so on, through every link of the chain. Until at length, "from the annihilation of birth results the annihilation of decrepitude, of death, of sufferings, of lamentations, of sorrow, of regret, of despair. It is thus that the annihilation of this world, which is but a mass of sorrows, takes place."[1]

This speculation is by no means easy to understand. Apparently it means that ignorance, in the sense of a mistaken notion of the reality of the material world, leads to a whole series of blunders, ending inevitably in birth. From this fundamental error of belief in the existence of sensible objects spring certain other false conceptions. Knowledge, which next ensues, may mean not merely cognition, but consciousness, knowledge of our existence; and in this sense, or in something like it, it must be taken in order to explain the apparent paradox of a deduction of the pedigree of knowledge directly from ignorance. Hence name and form, a still further distinction of the individual—a specialisation of the vague knowledge of himself which the last stage brought him to. The next step carries us on to the six seats of sensible qualities; a phrase expressing the organs by which sensible qualities are perceived—the five senses, and *Manas*, the heart, which the Indians considered as a sixth sense. It appears also from Burnouf's remarks that the Sanskrit term includes along with the organs

[1] H. B. I., p. 487.

the qualities they perceive, the Law being assigned to the heart or internal sense as the object of its perception. The six seats being given, contact follows; contact implies sensation, and sensation naturally leads to desire. Conception is represented as the effect of desire, but another translation of this term by attachment, fondness for material things, renders the sequence easier to understand. Attachment to anything but the three gems—the Buddha, the Law, and the Church—is, however, a fatal error, and leads to the melancholy result of existence. Evidently, however, the being whose downward progress has been thus described must have existed before, and the event here alluded to must probably be the passage into the definite condition of the human embryo. And this is rather confirmed by the fact that the next step is that of birth, followed, as a matter of course, by the miseries of human life, terminating in death.[1] And death, unless every remnant of attachment to, and desire for, all worldly things has been purged away, unless every trace of sinful tendencies has been obliterated, is but a fresh beginning of the same weary round.

SUBDIVISION 4.—*Theology and Ethics of the Tripitaka.*

Thus we have examined in succession the three great divisions of the Buddhist Canon. We may pass over a comparatively late and spurious addition to it, the Tantras—full of the worship of strange gods and goddesses, and of magical formularies—to consider the general features of these sacred works in reference

[1] I do not pretend to any certainty that the above interpretation is correct, but I have in the main followed a trustworthy guide, Burnouf. See H. B. I., p. 491–507.

to their theological teaching and to their moral tendency. Theology is perhaps a term that will be held to be misplaced in speaking of a system which acknowledges no God. Yet Buddhism is so full of supernatural creatures, and the Buddha himself occupies a position so nearly divine, that it would be hard to find a more appropriate word. Buddha himself is the central figure of the whole of his system, far more completely than Christ is the central figure of Christianity, or Mahomet of Islam. There is no Deity above him; he stands out alone, unrivalled, unequalled, and unapproachable. The gods of the Hindu pantheon are by no means annihilated in the Buddhist Scriptures. On the contrary, they play a certain part in them, as when some of the greatest among their number assist at the delivery of Mâyâ. But the part assigned to them is always a subordinate one; they are practically set aside, not by the sceptical process of questioning their existence, but by the more subtle one of introducing them as humbly seated at the Buddha's footstool, and devout recipients of his instructions. Hostility to Gautama Buddha there may be, but not from them. It proceeds from heretical Brahmans—rivals in trade—and from those whom they may for a time deceive. The gods are among the most docile of his pupils, and display a praiseworthy eagerness to acquire the knowledge he may condescend to impart. Infinitely above gods and men, because possessing infinitely deeper knowledge and infinitely higher virtue, stands the Tathâgata, the man who walks in the footsteps of his predecessors. His position is the greatest to which any mortal creature can attain. But it has been attained by many before, and will be

by many hereafter. Far away into ages separated from ours by millions of millions of years stretches the long list of Buddhas, for every age has received a similar light to lighten up its darkness. All have led lives marked by the same incidents, and have taught the same truths. But by and by the darkness has returned; the doctrines of the former Buddha have been forgotten, and a new one has been needed. Then in due season he has appeared, and has again opened to mankind the path of salvation. Thus Kâsyapa Buddha preceded Gautama Buddha, and Maitreya (now a Bodhisattva) will succeed him. The Buddha is an object of the most devout adoration. Prayers are addressed to him; his relics are enshrined in Stûpas, or buildings erected by the piety of believers to cover them; his footprints are viewed with reverential awe, and his tooth, preserved in Ceylon, receives the constant homage of that pious population. Thus his position is not unlike that of a true Deity, though the theory of Buddhism would require us to suppose that he is non-existent, and therefore wholly unable to aid his worshippers. But this theory is not acted upon, and is probably not held in all its strictness; for Buddha—though to some extent superseded in Northern Buddhism by other divinities—is the object of a decided worship in both its elements of prayer and praise.

But the pre-eminent station occupied by a Buddha is not reached without a long and painful education. Through ages, the length of which is scarcely to be expressed by numbers, they are qualifying themselves for their glorious task. During this period they are termed Bodhisattvas, that is, beings who have taken

a solemn resolution to become Buddhas, and are practising the necessary virtues. The very fact of taking this resolution is an exercise of exalted benevolence, for their excellence is such that they might, if they pleased, enter at once into Nirvâna. But such is their love for the human race, that they prefer to be born again and again in a world of woe, in order to throw open Nirvâna to others besides themselves. To attain their end, they must make an offering to some actual Buddha, wishing at the same time that by virtue of this act they may become Buddhas themselves; and they must receive an assurance from the object of their gift that this wish will be fulfilled. Thus Gautama, who happened at the time to be a prince, presented a golden vessel full of oil to a Buddha named Purana Dîpankara, with the wish alluded to, and was assured by him that he would in a future age become a supreme Buddha.[1] The tales of the pains endured, the sacrifices made, the virtues practised by Gautama during this probationary period are numerous and varied. He himself, by virtue of his faculty of knowing the past, related them to his disciples. He had sacrificed wife, children, property, even his own person, for the good of other living creatures; he had endured all kinds of sufferings; he had shown himself capable of the rarest unselfishness, the most perfect purity, the most unswerving rectitude. The tale of his endurances might move compassion, had it not been crowned at last with the highest reward to which a mortal can aspire.

While the Buddha occupies the first rank among human and superhuman beings, and a Bodhisattva

[1] M. B., p. 92.

the second, the Scriptures introduce us to others holding very conspicuous places among the spiritual nobility. Such, for instance, are the Pratyeka Buddhas. These are persons of very high intelligence and very extraordinary merit. But they are unable to communicate their knowledge to others. They can save themselves; others they cannot save. Herein lies their inferiority to supreme Buddhas,—that while their spiritual attainments are sufficient to ensure their entry into Nirvâna, they are inadequate to enable them to obtain the same privilege for any other person.

In addition to these not very interesting Buddhas, the legends speak of certain grades of intelligence attained by Gautama's hearers. Thus, we are often told that many of the audience—perhaps hundreds or thousands—after hearing a sermon from him, became Arhats; others are said to have become Anâgâmin, Sakridâgâmin, or Srotâpanna. These degrees are based upon the reception of the four truths. According to the manner in which a man received these truths, he entered one of eight paths, each of the four degrees having two classes, a higher and a lower one. Sometimes these paths are called "fruits;" a disciple is said to obtain the fruits of such and such a state. An Arhat is a person of very high station indeed. Excepting a Buddha, none is equal to him, either in knowledge or miraculous powers, both of which he possesses to a pre-eminent extent. The Arhat after his death enters at once into Nirvâna. The Anâgâmin enters the third path (from the bottom), and is exempt from re-birth except in the world of Devas, or gods. He who obtains or "sees" the fruit of the second path

is born once more in the world of gods or in that of men. Finally, the Srotâpanna undergoes re-birth either among gods or men seven times, and is then delivered from the stream of existence.[1]

Below the fortunate travellers along the paths stands the mass of ordinary believers. All of these, of course, aim ultimately—or should aim—at that perfection of knowledge and of character which ensures Nirvâna; but in popular Buddhism at the present day this distant goal appears to be well-nigh forgotten, and to have given place to some heaven, or place of enjoyment, above which the general hope does not rise.

Believers in general are divided into two classes, Bhikshus and Bhikshunîs, or monks and nuns; and Upâsakas, lay disciples. The distinction between these classes is well illustrated by the following extract from a sacred book, the consideration of which will lead us from the domain of theology into that of morality:—"What is to be done in the condition of a mendicant?—The rules of chastity must be observed

[1] The authorities do not entirely agree in the accounts they give of the speed with which these paths lead to Nirvâna. The above statement appears to me unquestionably the oldest and most authentic. It is in agreement with Eitel, Sanskrit-Chinese Dictionary, *sub vocibus* (Sakridâgâmin, however, is omitted), and with Hardy, E. M., p. 280.

Eitel indeed adds that an Arhat, if he does not enter Nirvâna, may become a Buddha, but this is probably a Northern perversion of the original notion. In the genuine authorities, a Bodhisattva is quite distinct from an Arhat. The account derived by Burnouf (H B. I, pp. 291 ff.) from Northern sources is palpably a corruption of the older doctrine, proceeding from that unbounded love of exaggerated numbers which is the besetting sin of Buddhist writers. According to this version, the Srotâpanna must pass through 80,000 ages before his seven births; the Sakridâgâmin, after 60,000 ages, is to be born once as a man and once as a god; the Anâgâmin, after 40,000 ages, is exempted from re-birth in the world of desire, and arrives at supreme knowledge; which the Arhat reaches after 20,000 ages. Poor comfort this to souls longing for their eternal rest. Cf. Köppen, R. B., vol. i. p. 498.

during the whole of life.—That is not possible; are there no other means?—There are others, friend; namely, to be a devotee (Upâsaka).—What is to be done in this condition?—It is necessary during the whole of one's life to abstain from murder, theft, pleasure, lying, and the use of intoxicating liquors." The injunctions thus stated to be binding on the laity are in fact the first five of the ten commandments, pleasure being simply a designation of unchastity, which the layman as well as the monk is here ordered to eschew. The first five commandments are in fact general, referring to universal ethical obligations, not merely to monastic discipline, like the other five. But Buddhist morality is by no means merely negative. It enjoins not only abstinence from such definite sins as these, but the practice of positive virtues in their most exalted forms. In no system is benevolence, or, as it is termed in the English New Testament, charity, more emphatically inculcated. Exhibited, as we have seen it is, in the highest degree by Buddha himself, it should be illustrated to the extent of their capabilities by all his followers. Chastity is the subject of almost equal praise. And the other virtues come in for their share of recognition, the general object of the examples held up to admiration being to exhort the faithful to a life spotless in all its parts, like that of their master. With this aim the legends related generally fall into some such form as this: Characters appear who undergo some suffering, but receive also some great reward, such as meeting with Buddha, and embracing his religion. It is then explained by Buddha that the sufferings were the result of some bad action done in a former life, and the benefit

received the result of some good action; while he will probably add that he himself in that bygone age stood in the relation of a benefactor to the recipient of his faith. Or a number of persons are introduced playing various parts, good and evil, and receiving blessings or misfortunes. One of these is conspicuous by the excellence of his conduct. Then, at the end of the story, the disciples are told not to imagine that this model of virtue is any other than Sâkyamuni himself, while the other characters are translated, according to their special peculiarities, each into some individual living at the time, and forming either one of Buddha's retinue, or connected with him by ties of kindred, or (if wicked) marked by hostility to his person or doctrine. Thus, the bad parts in these dramas are often allotted to his cousin Devadatta, who figures in these Scriptures as his typical opponent.

The essential doctrine of all these moral fictions—the corner-stone of Buddhist ethics—is that every single act of virtue receives its reward, every single transgression its punishment. The consequences of our good deeds or misdeeds, mystically embodied in our Karma, follow us from life to life, from earth to heaven, from earth to hell, and from heaven or hell to earth again. Karma expresses an idea by no means easily seized. Perhaps it may be defined as the sum total of our moral actions, good and bad, conceived as a kind of entity endowed with the force of destiny. It is our Karma that determines the character of our successive existences. It is our Karma that determines whether our next birth shall be in heaven or hell, in a happy or miserable condi-

tion here below. And as Karma is but the result of our own actions, each of which must bear its proper fruit, the balance, either on the credit or debit side of our account, must always be paid; to us or by us, as the case may be.

Let us illustrate this by an instance or two. A certain prince, named Kunâla, remarkable for his personal beauty, had been deprived of his eyes through an intrigue in his father's harem. Sâkya-muni, in pointing the moral, informs his disciples that Kunâla had formerly been a huntsman, who finding 500 gazelles in a cave, had put out their eyes in order to preclude their escape. For this cruelty he had suffered the pains of hell for hundreds of thousands of years, and had then had his eyes put out in 500 human existences. But Kunâla also enjoyed great advantages. He was the son of a king, he possessed an attractive person, and, above all, he had embraced the truths of Buddhism. Why was this? Because he had once caused a Stûpa of a former Buddha, which an unbelieving monarch had suffered to be pulled to pieces, to be rebuilt, and had likewise restored a statue of this same Buddha which had been spoilt.[1] The truly Buddhistic spirit of this young prince is evinced by the circumstance that he interceded earnestly with his father for the pardon of the step-mother who had caused him to be so cruelly mutilated.

In another case, a poor old woman, who had led a miserable existence as the slave of an unfeeling master and mistress, was re-born in one of the heavens, known as that of the three-and-thirty gods. Five hundred

[1] H. B. I., p. 414.

goddesses descended to the cemetery, where she had been heedlessly thrown into the ground, strewed flowers on her bones, and offered them spices. The reason of all this honour was, that on the previous day she had met with Kâtyâyana, an apostle of Buddhism, had drawn water and presented it to him in his bowl, and had consequently received a blessing from him, with an exhortation to enter her mistress's room after she had gone to sleep, and sitting on a heap of hay, to fix her mind exclusively upon Buddha. This advice she had attended to, and had consequently received the above-named reward.[1]

Good and evil, under this elaborate sytem, are thus the seeds which, by an invariable law, produce their appropriate fruits in a future state. The doctrine may in fact be best described in the words attributed to its author:—"A previous action does not die; be it good or evil, it does not die; the society of the virtuous is not lost; that which is done, that which is said, for the Âryas,[2] for these grateful persons, never dies. A good action well done, a bad action wickedly done, when they have arrived at their maturity, equally bear an inevitable fruit."[3]

[1] W. u. T., p. 153.
[2] Âryas is a term comprehending the several classes of believers.
[3] H. B, I., p. 98.

SECTION V.—THE ZEND-AVESTA.[1]

Persia was once a great power in the world; the Persian religion, a conquering and encroaching faith. The Persian Empire threatened to destroy the independence of Greece. It held the Jews in actual subjection, and its religious views profoundly influenced the development of theirs. Through the Jews, its ideas have penetrated the Christian world, and leavened Europe. It once possessed an extensive and remarkable sacred literature, but a few scattered fragments of which have descended to us. These fragments, recovered and first translated by Anquetil du Perron, have been but imperfectly elucidated as

[1] There is a complete translation of the Zend-Avesta by Spiegel. It contains useful introductory essays; but in the present state of Zend scholarship the translation cannot be regarded as final. Dr Haug, in a German treatise, has elucidated as well as translated a small, but very important, portion of the Zend-Avesta, termed the five Gâthâs. The same scholar has also published a volume of Essays on the Parsee language and religion, which contains some translated passages, and may be consulted with advantage, though Dr Haug's English stands in great need of revision. Burnouf has translated but a very small part of the Zend-Avesta, in a work entitled "Le Yaçna." Unfortunately Dr Haug and Dr Spiegel—both very eminent Zend scholars—are entirely at variance as to the proper method of translating these ancient documents; and pending the settlement of this question, any interpretation proposed must be regarded by the uninstructed reader as uncertain. I cannot refrain from adding an expression of regret that Dr Haug, to whose labours in the interpretation of these obscure fragments of antiquity we owe so much, should have so far forgotten himself as to fall foul of Dr Spiegel in a tone wholly unbecoming a scholar and inappropriate to the subject. It is not by this kind of learned Billingsgate that the superiority of his translation to that of his rival, as he evidently considers him, or his fellow-labourer, as I should prefer to call him, can be established.

yet by European scholars; and there can be no doubt that much more light remains to be cast upon them by philology as it progresses. Such as they are, however, I shall make use of the translations already before us to give my readers an imperfect account of the character of the Parsee Scriptures.

These compositions are the productions of several centuries, and are widely separated from one another in the character of their thought, and in the objects of worship proposed to the faithful follower of Zarathustra. The oldest among them, which may belong to the time of the prophet himself, are considered by Haug to be as ancient as B.C. 1200, while the youngest were very likely as recent as B.C. 500.

Haug considers the Avesta to be the most ancient text, while the Zend was a kind of commentary upon this already sacred book.

Taking the several portions of the Zend-Avesta in their chronological order (as far as this can be ascertained), we shall begin with the five Gâthâs, which are pronounced by their translator to be "by far the oldest, weightiest, and most important pieces of the Zend-Avesta."[1] Some portions of these venerable hymns are even attributed by him to Zarathustra himself; but this—except where the prophet is in some way named as the author—must be considered only as an individual opinion, which can carry no positive conviction to other minds until it is supported by stronger evidence than any at present accessible. Meantime, we may rest assured that we possess among these hymns some undoubted productions of the Zarathustrian age.

[1] F. G., xiii.

SUBDIVISION 1.—*The Five Gâthâs.*

Proceeding to the individual Gâthâs, we find that the first, which begins with the 28th chapter of the Yaçna, bears the following heading: "The revealed Thought, the revealed Word, the revealed Deed of the truthful Zarathustra.—The immortal saints chanted the hymns."[1]

The Gâthâ Ahunavaiti—such is its title—then proceeds:—

1. "Adoration to you, ye truthful hymns!

2. "I raise aloft my hands in devotion, and worship first all true works of the wise and holy Spirit, and the Understanding of the pious Disposition, in order to participate in this happiness.

3. "I will draw near to you with a pious disposition, O Wise One! O Living One! with the request that you will grant me the mundane and the spiritual life. By truth are these possessions to be obtained, which he who is self-illuminated bestows on those who strive for them."[2]

The most important portion of this Gâthâ is the 30th chapter, because in it we have a vivid picture of the conflict in which the religion of Ahura-Mazda was born. Philological inquiry has rendered it clear beyond dispute, that Parseeism took its rise in a religious schism between two sections of the great Aryan race, at a period so remote that the occupation of Hindostan by an offshoot of that race had not yet occurred. The common ancestors of Hindus and

[1] Throughout the Gâthâs I follow Haug; and I need make no apology for neglecting Spiegel's translation, because that scholar himself admits, with creditable candour, that even his indefatigable perseverance was baffled by the difficulties of this portion of the Yaçna.—Av., 2. xi.

[2] F. G., vol. i. p. 24.—Yaçna, xxviii. 1-3.

Persians still dwelt together in Central Asia, when the great Parsee Reformation disturbed their harmony; the one section adopting, or adhering to, the Vedic polytheism which they subsequently carried to India; the other embracing the more monotheistic creed which afterwards became the national religion of Persia.

The following hymn of the reformers carries us into the very midst of the strife:—

1. "I will now tell you who are assembled here, the wise sayings of the most wise, the praises of the living God, and the songs of the good spirit, the sublime truth which I see arising out of these sacred flames.

2. "You shall, therefore, hearken to the soul of nature (*i.e.*, plough and cultivate the earth);[1] contemplate the beams of fire with a most pious mind! Every one, both men and women, ought to-day to choose his creed (between the Deva and the Ahura religion). Ye offspring of renowned ancestors, awake to agree with us (*i.e.*, to approve of my lore, to be delivered to you at this moment)!"

(The prophet begins to deliver the words, revealed to him through the sacred flames.)

3. "In the beginning there was a pair of twins, two spirits, each of a peculiar activity; these are the good and the base, in thought, word, and deed. Choose one of these two spirits! Be good, not base!

4. "And these two spirits united created the first (material things); the one, the reality, the other, the non-reality. To the liars (the worshippers of the devas, *i.e.*, gods) existence will become bad, whilst the believer in the true God enjoys prosperity.

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[1] The sentences enclosed in brackets are Haug's explanations of the sense of the text.

5. "Of these two spirits you must choose one, either the evil, the originator of the worst actions, or the true holy spirit. Some may wish to have the hardest lot (*i.e.*, those who will not leave the polytheistic deva-religion), others adore Ahura-Mazda by means of sincere actions.

6. "You cannot belong to both of them (*i.e.*, you cannot be worshippers of the one true God and of many gods at the same time). One of the devas, against whom we are fighting, might overtake you, when in deliberation (what faith you are to embrace), whispering you to choose the no-mind. Then the devas flock together to assault the two lives (the life of the body, and that of the soul), praised by the prophets."[1]

In another portion of this Gâthâ it is interesting to observe the spirit of religious zeal breaking out, as it so generally does, into the language of persecution :—

xxxi. 18. "Do not listen to the sayings and precepts of the wicked (the evil spirit), because he has given to destruction house, village, district, and province. Therefore kill them (the wicked) with the sword!"

The wicked, as appears from the context, are those who did not accept the Zarathustrian revelation.

In the second Gâthâ, or Gâthâ Ustavaiti, there are some very curious passages. A few have been quoted in the notice of Zarathustra. The following verses indicate the nature of the worship addressed to Ahura-Mazda in the most ancient period of the Parsee religion :—

xliii. 2. "I believe thee to be the best being of all, the source of light for the world. Everybody shall choose thee (believe in thee) as the source of light, thee, thee, holiest spirit Mazda!

[1] Parsees, pp. 141, 142.—Yasna, 30.

Thou createst all good true things by means of the power of thy good mind at any time, and promisest us (who believe in thee) a long life.

4. "I will believe thee to be the powerful, holy (god) Mazda! For thou givest with thy hand, filled with helps, good to the pious man, as well as to the impious, by means of the warmth of the fire strengthening the good things. For this reason the vigour of the good mind has fallen to my lot.

5. "Thus I believed in thee as the holy God, thou living Wise One! Because I beheld thee to be the primeval cause of life in the creation. For thou hast made (instituted) holy customs and words, thou hast given a bad fortune (emptiness) to the base, and a good one to the good man. I will believe in thee, thou glorious God! in the last (future) period of creation."[1]

xliv. 3. "That which I shall ask thee, tell it me right, thou living God! Who was in the beginning the father and creator of truth? Who made the way for the sun and stars? Who causes the moon to increase and wane, if not thou? This I wish to know besides what I already know.

4. "That I will ask thee, tell it me right, thou living God! Who is holding the earth and the skies above it? Who made the waters and the trees of the field? Who is in the winds and storms that they so quickly run? Who is the creator of the good-minded beings, thou Wise One?

5. "That I will ask thee, tell it me right, thou living God! Who made the lights of good effect and the darkness? Who made the sleep of good effect and the activity? Who made morning, noon and night, always reminding the priest of his duties?"[2]

xlvi. 7. "Who is appointed protector of my property, Wise One! when the wicked endeavour to hurt me? Who else, if not thy fire, and thy mind, through which thou hast created the existence (good beings), thou living God! Tell me the power necessary for holding up the religion."[3]

The third Gâthâ is termed Çpeñta-Mainyus. It begins with praise of Ahura-Mazda as the giver of the two forces of perfection and immortality. From this

[1] Parsees, p. 149. [2] Ibid., p. 150. [3] Ibid., p. 156.

holiest spirit proceeds all the good contained in the words uttered by the good mind. He is the father of all truth. Of such a spirit is he who created this earth with the fire resting in its lap. Ahura-Mazda placed the gift of fire in the sticks that are rubbed together by the duality of truth and piety. The following verse refers to Mazda's prophet, Zarathustra :—

xlviii. 4. "He who created, by means of his wisdom, the good and the no-mind in thinking, words, and deeds, rewards his obedient followers with prosperity. Art thou (Mazda) not he in whom the last cause of both intellects (good and evil) is *hidden?*"[1]

The concluding chapter of this Gâthâ is a hymn of praise supposed to emanate from the Spirit of Earth and to be addressed to the highest genii. It is not without beauty and sublimity, but I forbear to make quotations from it, as some of its most interesting verses are noticed elsewhere.

The fourth and fifth Gâthâs are much shorter, and are considered by Haug as an appendix. The following verses may serve as a specimen of the former :—

liii. 20. "May you all together grant us this your help, truth through the good mind, and the good word in which piety consists. Be lauded and praised. The Wise One bestows happiness.

21. "Has not the Holy One, the living Wise One, created the radiant truth, and possession with the good mind by means of the wise sayings of Ârmaiti, by her actions and her faith?

22. "The living Wise One knows what is always the best for

[1] Parsees, p. 159.

me in the adoration of those who existed and still exist. These I will invoke with mention of their names, and I will approach them as their panegyrist."[1]

Of the first three verses of the fifth Gâthâ I have spoken above.[2] The fourth and fifth run thus :—

liii. 4. "I will zealously confess this your faith, which the blessed one destined to the landlord for the country people, to the truthful householder for the truthful people, ever extending the glory and the beauty of the good mind, which the living Wise One has bestowed on the good faith for ever and ever.

5. "I proclaim formulæ of blessing to girls about to be married: Attend! attend to them! You possess by means of those formulæ the life of the good mind. Let one receive the other with upright heart; for thus only will you prosper."[3]

SUBDIVISION 2.—*Yaçna* 35–41, *or the Yaçna of seven chapters.*

The Yaçna of seven chapters, which in the present arrangement of the text is inserted between the first and second Gâthâs, is of more recent date than the Gâthâs, but more ancient than the rest of the Zend-Avesta. "It appears to be the work of one of the earliest successors of the prophet, called in ancient times *Zarathustra* or *Zarathustrotema*, who, deviating somewhat from the high and pure monotheistic principles of Çpitama, made some concessions to the adherents of the ante-Zoroastrian religion by addressing prayers to other beings than Ahura-Mazda."[4] The seven chapters may be most accurately described as Psalms of praise, in which a great variety of objects, spiritual and natural, receive a tribute of pious

[1] F. G., vol. ii. p. 56.
[2] Vol. i. p. 229.
[3] F. G., vol. ii. p. 57.
[4] Parsees, p. 219.

reverence from the worshipper. They are not, however, on that account to be considered as gods, or as in any way the equals of Ahura-Mazda, who is still supreme. The beings thus addressed are portions of the "good creation," or of the things created by the good power, Ahura-Mazda; and they are either subjects in his spiritual kingdom, such as the Amesha-çpentas (seven very important spirits), or they are simply portions of the material universe treated as semi-divine, and exalted to objects of religious worship. Thus in the last chapter of this section, the author directs his laudations to the following, among other, genii and powers: the dwelling of the waters, the parting of the ways, mountains, the wind, the earth, the pure ass in Lake Vouru-Kasha, this lake itself, the Soma, the flowing of the waters, the flying of the birds. It is plain from this enumeration that we are already a step beyond the simple adoration of Ahura-Mazda so conspicuous in the Gâthâs, and that the door is opened to the multitude of spirits and divinities that make their appearance in other parts of the Parsee ritual.

This section of the Yaçna opens, however, with a striking address to Ahura-Mazda:[1]—

xxxv. 1. "We worship Ahura-Mazda the pure, the master of purity. We worship the Amesha-çpentas (the archangels), the possessors of good, the givers of good. We worship the whole creation of the true spirit, both the spiritual and terrestrial, all that supports (raises) the welfare of the good creation, and the spread of the good Mazdayaçna religion.

2. "We praise all good thoughts, all good words, all good deeds, which are and will be (which are being done and which

[1] It is a satisfaction to find that Spiegel's translation does not differ so widely from Haug's after we leave the territory of the Gâthâs. As a specimen, I quote the following verses from his Avesta, vol. ii. p. 135,

have been done), and we likewise keep clean and pure all that is good.

3. "O Ahura-Mazda, thou true happy being! we strive to think, to speak, and to do only those of all actions which might be best fitted to promote the two lives (that of the body and of the soul).

4. "We beseech the spirit of earth by means of these best works (agriculture) to grant us beautiful and fertile fields, to the believer as well as to the unbeliever, to him who has riches as well as to him who has no possession."[1]

The following invocation of fire deserves to be mentioned before we quit this portion of the Yaçna :—

xxxvi. 4. "Happy is the man to whom thou comest in power, O Fire, Son of Ahura-Mazda.

5. "Friendlier than the friendliest, more deserving of adoration than the most adorable.

6. "Mayest thou come to us helpfully to the greatest of transactions. . . .

9. "O Fire, Son of Ahura-Mazda, we approach thee

10. "with a good spirit, with good purity."[2]

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which the reader may compare with the English rendering of the same passage in the text :—

Yaçna Haptaŋhâiti.

xxxv. 1.

1. "(Raçpi). Den Ahura-Mazda, den reinen Herrn des Reinen, preisen wir. Die Amesha-çpenta, die guten Herrscher, die weisen, preisen wir. 2. Die ganze Welt des Reinen preisen wir, die himmlische wie die irdische, 3. mit Verlangen nach der guten Reinheit, mit Verlangen nach dem guten mazdayaçnischen Gesetze. 4. (Zaota.) Der guten Gedanken, Worte und Werke, die hier und anderswo 5. gethan worden sind oder noch gethan werden, 6. Lobpreiser und Verbreiter sind wir, damit wir zu den Guten gehören mögen. 7. Das glauben wir, Ahura-Mazda, Reiner, Schöner, 8. Das wollen wir denken, sagen und thun: 9. was das Beste ist unter den Handlungen der Menschen für beide Welten. 10. Durch diese Thaten nun erbitten wir, dass für das Vieh 11. Annehmlichkeit und Futter gespendet werden möge 12. den Gelehrten wie den Ungelehrten, den Mächtigen wie den Unmächtigen."

[1] Parsees, p. 163. [2] Av., ii. 137.

SUBDIVISION 3.—*Yaçna, Chapter XII.*

This chapter is stated by Haug to be written in the Gâthâ dialect; it is therefore extremely ancient, and as it contains the Confession of Faith made by Zarathustrian converts on their abandonment of idolatry, or worship of the Devas, it is of sufficient importance to be quoted at length:—

xii. 1. "I cease to be a Deva *worshipper*. I profess to be a Zoroastrian Mazdayaçna (worshipper of Ahura-Mazda), an enemy of the Devas, and a devotee to Ahura, a praiser of the immortal saints (Amesha-çpentas), a worshipper of the immortal saints. I ascribe all good things to Ahura-Mazda, who is good, and has good, who is true, lucid, shining, who is the originator of all the best things, of the spirit in nature (gâus), of the growth in nature, of the luminaries and the self-shining brightness which is in the luminaries.

2. "I choose (follow, profess) the holy Ârmaiti, the good; may she be mine! I abominate all fraud and injury committed on the spirit of earth, and all damage and destruction of the quarters of the Mazdayaçnas.

3. "I allow the good spirits who reside on this earth in the good animals (as cows, sheep, &c.), to go and roam about free according to their pleasure. I praise, besides, all that is offered with prayer to promote the growth of life. I shall cause neither damage nor destruction to the quarters of the Mazdayaçnas, neither with my body nor my soul.

4. "I forsake the Devas, the wicked, bad, false, untrue, the originators of mischief, who are most baneful, destructive, the basest of all beings. I forsake the Devas and those who are Devas-like, the witches and their like, and any being whatever of such a kind. I forsake them with thoughts, words and deeds; I forsake them hereby publicly, and declare that every lie and falsehood is to be done away with.

5, 6. "In the same way as Zarathustra at the time when Ahura-Mazda was holding conversations and meetings with him,

and both were conversing with each other, forsook the Devas; so do I forsake the Devas, as the holy Zarathustra did.

7. "To that party to which the waters belong, to whatever party the trees, and the animating spirit of nature, to that party to which Ahura-Mazda belongs, who has created this spirit and the pure man; to that party of which Zarathustra, and Kavâ Vistâçpa and Frashaostra and Jâmâçpa were, of that party of which all the ancient fire-priests (Soshyañtō) were, the pious, who were spreading the truth: of the same party and creed *am* I.

8. "I am a Mazdayaçna, a Zoroastrian Mazdayaçna. I profess this religion by praising and preferring it to others (the Deva religion). I praise the thought which is good, I praise the word which is good, I praise the work which is good.

9. "I praise the Mazdayaçna religion, and the pure brotherhood which it establishes and defends against enemies, the Zoroastrian Ahura religion, which is the greatest, best, and most prosperous of all that are, and that will be. I ascribe all good to Ahura-Mazda. This shall be the praise (profession) of the Mazdayaçna religion."

SUBDIVISION 4.—*The Younger Yaçna, and Vispered.*

While the Gâthâs and the confession just quoted represent the most ancient phase of the Mazdayaçna faith, we enter, in the remaining portion of the Yaçna, on a much later stage of the growing creed. So many new divinities, or at any rate, objects of reverential addresses, now enter upon the scene, that we almost lose sight of Ahura-Mazda in the throng of his attendants. We seem to be some ages away from the days when Zarathustra bade his hearers choose between the one true God and the multitude of false gods worshipped by his enemies. Ahura-Mazda is safely enthroned, and Zarathustra shines out gloriously as his prophet; but Zarathustra's creed is overloaded with elements of which he himself knew nothing.

The first chapter of the Yaçna, a liturgical prayer, brings these elements conspicuously before us. It is an invocation and celebration of a great variety of powers belonging to what is termed the good creation, or the world of virtuous beings and good things, as opposed to the malicious beings and bad things who form the realm of evil.[1] Thus it opens:—

"I invoke and I celebrate the creator Ahura-Mazda, luminous, resplendent, very great and very good, very perfect and very energetic, very intelligent and very beautiful, eminent in purity, who possesses the excellent knowledge, the source of pleasure; him who has created us, who has formed us, who has nourished us, the most accomplished of intelligent beings."[2]

Every verse, until we approach the end, commences with the same formula:—"I invoke and I celebrate;" or, as Spiegel translates it, "I invite and announce it:" the sole difference is in the beings invoked. Many of these are powers of more or less eminence in the Parsee spiritual hierarchy, but it would be going beyond our object here to enumerate their names and specify their attributes. To a large proportion of them the epithets "pure, lord of purity," are added, while some are dignified with more special titles of honour. After the above homage to Ahura-Mazda, the writer invokes and celebrates, among others: Mithra

[1] I follow Burnouf's translation, because the strict accuracy of his method is acknowledged by both Haug and Spiegel. There are considerable differences in the text followed by Burnouf and Spiegel, which I need not weary the reader by particularising in detail.

[2] Y., p. 146.—Cf. Spiegel: 1. "Ich lade ein und thue es kund: dem Schöpfer Ahura-Mazda, dem glänzenden, majestätischen, grössten, besten, schönsten, 2. dem stärksten, verständigsten, mit bestem Körper versehenen, durch Heiligkeit höchsten. 3. Der sehr weise ist, der weithin erfreut, 4. welcher uns schuf, welcher uns bildete, welcher uns erhielt, der Heiligste unter den Himmlischen."—Av., ii. 35.

(a very famous god), who increases oxen, who has 1000 ears, and 10,000 eyes; the fire of Ahura-Mazda; the water given by Ahura-Mazda; the Fravashis (angels or guardian spirits) of holy men and of women who are under men's protection; energy, with a good constitution and an imposing figure; victory given by Ahura; the months; the new moon; the full moon; the time of fecundation; the years; all the lords of purity, and thirty-three genii surrounding Hâvani, who are of admirable purity, whom Mazda has made known, and Zarathustra has proclaimed; the stars, especially a star named Tistrya; the moon, which contains the germ of the ox; the sun, the eye of Ahura-Mazda; trees given by Mazda; the Word made known by Zarathustra against the Devas; the excellent law of the Mazdayaçnas; the perfect benediction; the pure and excellent man; these countries and districts; pastures and houses; the earth, the sky, the wind; the great lord of purity; days, months, and seasons; the Fravashis of the men of the ancient law; those of contemporaries and relations, and his own; all genii who ought to be invoked and adored. It is manifest from this invocation, in which I have omitted many names and many repetitions, how far we are from the stern and earnest simplicity of the Gâthâs. Regular liturgical forms have sprung up, and these express the more developed and complicated worship which the Parsee priesthood has now engrafted on the Zarathustrian monotheism.

The concluding verses run as follows:—

"O thou who art given in this world, given against the Devas, Zarathustra[1] the pure, lord of purity, if I have wounded thee,

[1] No mention of Zarathustra here in Spiegel.—Av., ii. 44.

either in thought, word, or deed, voluntarily or involuntarily, I again address this praise in thine honour; yes, I invoke thee if I have failed against thee in this sacrifice and this invocation.

"O all ye very great lords, pure, masters of purity, if I have wounded you, &c. [as above].

"May I, a worshipper of Mazda, an adherent of Zarathustra, an enemy of the Devas, an observer of the precepts of Ahura, address my homage to him who is given here, given against the Devas; to Zarathustra, pure, lord of purity, for the sacrifice, for the invocation, for the prayer that renders favourable, for the benediction. (May I address my homage) to the lords (who are) the days, the parts of days, &c., for the benediction; that is to say: (may I address my homage) to the lords (who are) the days, the parts of days, the months, the seasons of the year (Gahanbârs), the years; for the sacrifice, for the invocation, for the prayer that renders favourable, for the benediction."[1]

The rest of the Yaçna consists mainly of praises or prayers addressed to the very numerous objects of Parsee adoration, and most of it is of little interest. The following short section, however, deserves remark:—

Yaçna 12.

1. "I praise the thoughts rightly thought, the words rightly spoken, and the deeds rightly done.
2. "I seize upon (or resort to) all good thoughts, words, and deeds.
3. "I forsake all bad thoughts, words, and deeds.
4. "I bring you, O Amesha-çpentas,
5. "Praise and adoration,
6. "With thoughts, words, and deeds, with heavenly mind, the vital force from my own body."[2]

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[1] Y., pp. 585, 588, 592. The concluding stanza is simpler and more intelligible in Spiegel.—Av., ii. 44.

[2] Av., vol. ii. p. 85.—Yaçna, 12. The ch. xii. quoted above is No. 13 in Spiegel.

In the following verses again there is some excellence:—

1. "May that man attain that which is best who teaches us the right way to our profit in this world, both the material and the spiritual world, the plain way that leads to the worlds where Ahura is enthroned, and the sacrificer, resembling thee, a sage, a saint, O Mazda.

2. "May there come to this dwelling contentment, blessing, fidelity, and the wisdom of the pure."

8. "In this dwelling may Çraosha[1] (obedience) put an end to disobedience, peace to strife, liberality to avarice, wisdom to error, truthful speech to lying, which detests purity."[2]

The prominent position occupied by fire in the Parsee faith is well known. The presence of fire is indeed an essential part of their ritual, in which it is treated with no less honour than the consecrated wafer in that of Catholic Christians. Not only, however, is it employed in their rites, but it is addressed as an independent being, to whom worship is due. Not that its place in the hierarchy is to be confounded with that of Ahura-Mazda. It is not put upon a level with the supreme being, but it is addressed as his son, its rank being thus still more closely assimilated to that of the host, which is in like manner a part of the liturgical machinery and an embodiment of the son of God. A special chapter of the Yaçna—the 61st—is devoted to Fire, and a summary of its contents will help us to understand the light in which this deity was regarded.

The sacrificer begins by vowing offerings and praise

[1] Çraosha is an important divinity in Parsee worship, who is considered by Spiegel to express the moral quality of obedience.

[2] Av., ii. 186, 187.—Yaçna, 59.

and good nourishment to "Fire, son of Ahura-Mazda." He trusts that Fire may ever be provided with a proper supply of wood, and may always burn brightly in this dwelling, even till the final resurrection. He beseeches Fire to give him much property, much distinction, holiness, a ready tongue, wit and understanding, activity, sleeplessness, and posterity. Fire is said to await nourishment from all; whoever comes, he looks at his hands, saying: "What does the friend bring his friend, the coming one to him who sits alone?" And this is the blessing he bestows on him who brings him dry wood, picked out for burning: "Mayest thou be surrounded with herds of cattle, with abundance of men. May it be with thee according to the desire of thy heart, according to the desire of thy soul. Be joyous, live thy life the whole time that thou shalt live."[1]

The last chapter but one of the Yaçna is a hymn in universal praise of the good creation. All the objects belonging to that creation—that is, made by Ahura-Mazda, and standing in contrast with the bad creation of Aĝra-Mainyus—are enumerated, and as a catalogue of these the hymn is interesting. Ahura-Mazda himself is named first; then Zarathustra; after this follows the Fravashi (angel) of Zarathustra, the Amesha-çpentas, the Fravashis of the pure, and so forth, through a long list of animate and inanimate beings. Each is named with the formula "we praise" following the title, as: "The whole earth we praise."[2]

So close is the resemblance between the Vispered

[1] Av., vol. ii. p. 191.—Yaçna, 61. This blessing is repeated, Khorda-Avesta, 11.

[2] Av., vol. ii. p. 202.—Yaçna, 70.

and that portion of the Yaçna which we have just examined, that it will be needless to dwell upon the contents of the former. We may therefore at once pass on to a very important section, for theological purposes, of the Zend-Avesta, namely—

Subdivision 5.—*Vendidad.*

Totally unlike either the Yaçna, the Vispered, or the Yashts, the Vendidad is a legislative code—dealing indeed largely with religious questions, but not confining itself exclusively to them. It differs from the remainder of the sacred volume much as Leviticus differs from the Psalms, or as the Institutes of Menu differ from the hymns of the Rig-Veda. It is regarded as equally holy with the rest of the Avesta, and is recited in divine service along with Vispered and Yaçna, the three together forming what is termed the Vendidad-Sade.[1] Its abrupt termination indicates that the code is not before us in its entirety; the portion which has been preserved, however, does not appear to have suffered great mutilation. Let us briefly summarise its contents, first premising that the form they assume (with trifling exceptions) is that of conversations between Ahura-Mazda and his prophet.

The first Fargard (or chapter) is an enumeration of the good countries or places created by Ahura-Mazda, and of the evils—such as the serpent, the wasp, and various moral offences, including that of doubt—created in opposition to him in each case by the

[1] Av., ii. lxxv.

president of the bad creation, Aĝra-Mainyus. The second Fargard is a long narrative of the proceedings of a mythological hero named Yima (the Indian Yama), to whom Ahura-Mazda is stated to have once committed the government of the world, or of some part of it. Thus far we have not entered on the proper subject-matter of the Vendidad. The third Fargard, while still introductory, approaches more nearly to the subsequent chapters, alike in its form and its contents. In it Zarathustra lays certain queries before Ahura-Mazda, and the replies given by that deity are of high importance for the comprehension of both the social and moral status of the Parsees at the time when this dialogue was written. The stress laid upon the virtue of cultivating the soil is especially to be noticed. Similar sentiments are frequently repeated in the Vendidad, and indicate a people among whom agriculture was still in its infancy, the transition from the pastoral state to the more settled condition of tillers of the soil being still incomplete. The compilers of this code evidently felt strongly the extreme value to their youthful community of agricultural pursuits, and therefore encouraged them at every convenient opportunity by representing them as peculiarly meritorious in the sight of God.

Zarathustra begins his inquiries by asking what is in the first place most agreeable to this earth, and successively ascertains what are the five things which give it most satisfaction, and what the five which cause it the most displeasure. Ahura-Mazda answers that, in the first place, a holy man with objects of sacrifice is the most agreeable; then a holy man making

his dwelling-place, and storing it with all that pertains to a happy and righteous life; then the production of grain and of fruit-trees, the irrigation of thirsty land, or the drainage of moist land; fourthly, the breeding of live-stock and draught-cattle; fifthly, a special incident connected with the presence of such animals on the land. The five displeasing things are, the meetings of Daevas and Drujas (evil spirits), the interment of men or dogs (which was contrary to the law), the accumulation of Dakhmas, or places where the bodies of the dead were left exposed, the dens of animals made by Aĝra-Mainyus, and lastly, unbecoming conduct on the part of the wife or son of a holy man. Further questions are then put as to the mode of conduct which wins the approbation of the earth, and it is stated to consist in actions which tend to counteract the evils above enumerated. In the course of these replies occasion is again taken to eulogise the man who vigorously cultivates the soil, and to censure him who idly leaves it uncultivated. Certain penalties are then imposed on those who bury dogs or men, but the sin of leaving them underground for two years is declared to be inexpiable, except by the Mazdayaçna Law, which can purify the worst offenders:—

"For it (the Law) will take away these (sins) from those who praise the Mazdayaçna Law, if they do not again commit wicked actions. For this Mazdayaçna Law, O holy Zarathustra, takes away the bonds of the man who praises it. It takes away deceit. It takes away the murder of a pure man. It takes away the burial of the dead. It takes away inexpiable actions. It takes away accumulated guilt. It takes away all sins which men commit."[1]

[1] Av., vol. i. p. 87, 88.—Vendidad, iii. 140–148.

We see from this that the power of the Law to deliver sinners from the burden of their offences was in no way inferior to that of the Atonement of Christ.

It is unnecessary to dwell upon the fourth Fargard, which deals with the penalties—consisting mainly of corporal punishment—for breach of contract and other offences. The fifth and sixth, being concerned with the regulations to be observed in case of impurity arising from the presence of dead bodies, are of little interest. A large part of the seventh is occupied with the same subject, but its course is interrupted by certain precautions to be attended to in the graduation of students of medicine, which may be commended to the notice of other religious communities. Should a Mazdayaçna desire to become a physician, on whom, inquires Zarathustra, shall he first try his hand, the Mazdayaçnas (orthodox Parsees), or the Daevayaçnas (adherents of a false creed)? Ahura-Mazda replies that the Daevayaçnas are to be his first patients. If he has performed three surgical operations on these heretics, and his three patients have died, he is to be held unfit for the medical profession, and must on no account presume to operate on the adherents of the Law. If, however, he is successful with the Daevayaçnas, he is to receive his degree, and may proceed to practise on the more valuable bodies of faithful Parsees. So careful a contrivance to ensure that none but infidels shall fall victims to the knife of the unskilful surgeon evinces no little ingenuity.

The eighth Fargard relates chiefly to the treatment of dead bodies, while the ninth proceeds to narrate the rites for the purification of those who have come in contact with them. A terrible penalty—that of

decapitation—is enacted against the man who ventures to perform this rite without having learnt the law from a priest competent to purify. The tenth Fargard prescribes the prayers by which the *Drukhs*, or impure spirit supposed to attach itself to corpses, and to come from them upon the living, is to be driven away; and the subject is continued in the eleventh, which contains formularies for the purification of dwellings, fires, and other objects. Along with injunctions as to the purification of houses where a death has occurred, the twelfth Fargard informs its hearers how many prayers they are to offer up for deceased relatives. The number varies both according to their relationship, being highest for those that are nearest akin, and according to their purity or sinfulness, double as many being required for the sinful as for the pure. After a short introduction expounding the merit of killing a certain species of animal and the demerit of killing another (what they are is uncertain), the thirteenth Fargard proceeds to enumerate in detail the various kinds of offences against dogs, and the corresponding penalties. Dogs were evidently of the utmost importance to the community, and their persons are guarded with scarcely less care than those of human beings. They are held to have souls, which migrate after their decease to a canine Paradise. It seems, too, that shades of departed dogs are appointed to watch the dangerous bridge over which men's souls must travel on the road to felicity, and which the wicked cannot pass; for we are informed of the soul of a man who has killed a watchdog, that "the deceased dogs who guard against crime and watch the bridge do not

make friends with it on account of its abominable and horrible nature;"[1] while a man who has killed a water-dog is required to make "offerings for its pious soul for three days and three nights."[2] The place to which the souls of these animals repair is termed "the water-dwelling," and it is stated that two water-dogs meet them on their arrival, apparently to welcome them to their aqueous heaven.[3] Not only killing dogs, but wounding them or giving them bad food, are crimes to be severely punished; and even in case of madness the dog's life is on no account to be taken. On the contrary, the utmost care is to be taken, by fastening him so as to prevent escape, that he should do himself no injury, for if he should happen in his madness to fall into water and die, the community will have incurred sin by the accident.[4] The following verses convey an interesting notion of the esteem in which the dog was held among the early Parsees. The speaker is Ahura-Mazda:—

"I have created the dog, O Zarathustra, with his own clothes and his own shoes; with a sharp nose and sharp teeth; attached to mankind, for the protection of the herds. Then I created the dog, even I Ahura-Mazda, with a body capable of biting enemies. When he is in good health, when he is with the herds, when he is in good voice, O holy Zarathustra, there comes not to his village either thief or wolf to carry off property unperceived from the villages."[5]

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[1] Av., vol. i. p. 192.—Vendidad, xiii. 25.

[2] Av., vol. i. p. 201.—Vendidad, xiii. 173.

[3] Av., vol. i. p. 200.—Vendidad, xiii. 167.

[4] There is, indeed, a passage which permits the mutilation of a mad dog by cutting off an ear, or a foot, or the tail; Spiegel, however, regards it as interpolated, and it is palpably at variance with the remainder of the chapter.

[5] Av., vol. i. p. 197.—Vendidad, xiii. 106–113.

In the fourteenth Fargard, water-dogs are further protected against wounds; while in the fifteenth, the preservation of the canine species at large is ensured by elaborate enactments. To give a dog bones which it cannot gnaw, or food so hot as to burn its tongue, is a sin; to frighten a bitch in pup, as by clapping the hands, is likewise to incur guilt; and they are gravely criminal who suffer puppies to die from inattention. If born in camel-stalls, stables, or any such places, it is incumbent on the proprietor to take charge of them; or, if the litter should be at large, at least the nearest inhabitant is bound to become their protector. Strangely intermingled with these precautions are rules prohibiting cohabitation with women in certain physical conditions, and enactments for the prevention of abortion, and for ensuring the support of a pregnant girl by her seducer, at least until her child is born. The crime of abortion is described in a manner which curiously reveals the practices occasionally resorted to by Parsee maidens. Should a single woman be with child, and say, "The child was begotten by such and such a man"—

"If then this man says, 'Try to make friends with an old woman and inquire of her;' if then this girl does make friends with an old woman and inquire of her, and this old woman brings Baĝa, or Shaêta, or Ghnâna, or Fraçpâta, or any of the vegetable purgatives, saying, 'Try to kill this child;' if then the girl does try to kill the child, then the girl, the man, and the old woman are all equally criminal."

Neither the sixteenth nor the seventeenth Fargard need detain us. They relate, the one to the above-mentioned rules to be observed towards women, the other to the disposal of the hair and nails, which

are held to pollute the earth. The eighteenth Fargard begins, as if in the middle of a conversation, with an address by Ahura-Mazda on the characteristics of true and false priests, some, it appears, having improperly pretended to the priesthood. After some questions on other points of doctrine put by Zarathustra, we are suddenly introduced to a conversation between the angel Çraosha and the Drukhs, or evil spirit, in which the latter describes the several offences that cause her to become pregnant, or, in other words, increase her influence in the world. After this interlude, we return to Ahura-Mazda and Zarathustra. The prophet, having been exhorted to put questions, inquires of his god who causes him the greatest annoyance. Ahura-Mazda replies that it is "he who mingles the seed of the pious and the impious, of Daeva-worshippers and of those who do not worship the Daevas, of sinners and non-sinners." Such persons are "rather to be killed than poisonous snakes." Hereupon Zarathustra proceeds to ascertain what are the penalties for those who cohabit with women at seasons when the law requires them to be separate. At the beginning of the nineteenth Fargard, we have an account of the temptation of the prophet by the evil one, to which allusion has been made in another place. Zarathustra seeks for information as to the means of getting rid of impurities, and is taught by Ahura-Mazda to praise the objects he has created. In the latter part of the chapter we have a remarkable account of the judgment of departed souls. In conclusion, we have a psalm of praise recited by the prophet in honour of God, the earth, the stars, the

Gâthâs, and numerous other portions of the good creation. There is little in the twentieth Fargard beyond the information that Thrita was the first physician, and a formula of conjuration, apparently intended to be used in order to drive away diseases. In the twenty-first, we find praises of the cloud, the sun, and other heavenly bodies. The last Fargard of the Vendidad differs widely from the rest in its manner of representing Ahura-Mazda. It is, no doubt, as Spiegel observes, of late origin. Ahura-Mazda complains of the opposition he has encountered from Aĝra-Mainyus, who has afflicted him with illness (whether in his own person, or in that of mankind, is not clear). He calls upon Manthra-Çpenta, the Word, to heal him, but that spirit declines, and a messenger is accordingly sent to Airyama to summon him to the task.[1] Airyama commences his preparations on an extensive scale, but at this point the Vendidad breaks off, and we are left in doubt as to the result of his efforts.

SUBDIVISION 6.—*The Khorda-Avesta, with the Homa Yasht.*

The term Khorda-Avesta, or little Avesta, is applied, according to Spiegel, to that part of the Zend-Avesta which includes the Yashts, and certain prayers, some of them of extreme sanctity, and constantly employed in Parsee worship. He informs us that, while the remainder of the sacred texts serve more especially for priestly study and for public reading, the Khorda-Avesta is mainly used in private devotion.[2] Some

[1] Spiegel holds that Airyama is only a certain prayer hypostatised.—Cf. Av., vol. iii. p. 34.

[2] Av., vol. iii. p. 1.

of its prayers belong to a comparatively recent period, being composed no longer in the Zend language, but in a younger dialect; and we meet in them with the Persian forms of the old names—Ormazd standing for Ahura-Mazda, Ahriman for Ağra-Mainyus, and Zerdoscht for Zarathustra. The names of the genii have undergone corresponding alterations. We find ourselves in these prayers, and indeed throughout the Yashts, many centuries removed from the age of Zarathustra and his immediate followers. Some of the more celebrated prayers, however (not belonging to the class of Yashts), must be of considerable antiquity, if we may judge from the fact of their being mentioned in the Yaçna. Thus, in the 19th chapter of the Yaçna, we find an elaborate exaltation of the powers of the Ahuna-Vairya, which stands second in the Khorda-Avesta. Zarathustra is represented as asking Ahura-Mazda, "What was the speech which thou spokest to me, as existing before the sky, before the water, before the earth, before the ox, before the trees, before the fire, son of Ahura-Mazda, before the pure men, before the Daevas with perverted minds, and before men, before the whole corporeal world, before all things created by Mazda which have a pure origin?" This speech, existing prior to all created objects, is declared to have been a part of the Ahuna-Vairya. The immense benefits of repeating this prayer, which is stated to ensure salvation, are then recounted to the prophet. The 20th chapter is occupied with the merits of another of these short formularies, the Ashem-vôhû. These prayers are in continual use, not only in the liturgy, but among the laity. They are sometimes required

to recite great numbers of Ahuna-Vairyas at one time, and at the commencement of sowing, or of any good work, it is proper to repeat it. The Ashem-vôhû is to be said on various occasions, particularly on waking and before going to sleep.[1] The higher sanctity, as well as greater antiquity, of these prayers is evinced by the fact that we find them constantly introduced in the course of others, to which they form a necessary supplement. There are often several Ashem-vôhûs in a single brief prayer. The Ashem-vôhû, in fact, fulfils a function much like that of the Lord's prayer in the liturgies of some Christian Churches.

Let us now see what these most sacred forms of adoration contain. The Ashem-vôhû is to this effect :—

> "Purity is the best possession.
> Hail, hail to him :
> Namely, to the pure man best in purity."[2]

It is strange that, in a formulary occupying so conspicuous a place in Parsee devotion, there should be no acknowledgment of God. But this want is supplied in the Ahuna-Vairya, or Yathâ-ahû-vairyo, which follows it.

Yathâ-ahû-vairyo :—

> "As it is the Lord's will, so (is he) the ruler from purity.
> (We shall receive) gifts from Vohu-mano for the works (we do) in the world for Mazda.
> And (he gives) the kingdom to Ahura who protects the poor."[3]

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[1] Av., vol. ii. pp. lxxxii., lxxxiii.
[2] Av., vol. iii. p. 3.—Khorda-Avesta, 1.
[3] Av., vol. iii.—Khorda-Avesta, 2.

Certainly this is not very intelligible, but the last clause is remarkable, as implying that the way to advance God's kingdom on earth is to confer benefits on the poor.

Passing over a number of other prayers, we enter upon the Yashts, which are distinguished from all other parts of the Avesta by the fact that each of them is written in celebration of some particular god or genius. Ahura-Mazda, indeed, still retains his supremacy, and every Yasht begins with a formula, of which the first words are "In the name of the God Ormazd," while the first Yasht is devoted exclusively to his praise. Subject to this recognition, however, the inferior potentates are each in turn the object of panegyrics in that exaggerated style in which Oriental literature delights. We need not stop to recount the particular honours rendered to each. One Yasht, however, is sufficiently curious to merit our attention, the more so as we possess a translation of it by Burnouf.[1] It is termed the Homa Yasht, and is intended to extol the brilliant qualities of the god whose name it bears. At that period of the day which is termed Hâvani—so it begins—Homa came to find Zarathustra, who was cleaning his fire, and singing the Gâthâs. "Zarathustra asked him: 'What man art thou who in all the existing world appearest to my sight as the most perfect, with thy beautiful and immortal person?' Then Homa, the holy one, who

[1] In the "Journal Asiatique," 4me Serie, tom. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. I have followed it exclusively. The Homa Yasht is not formally included in the Khorda-Avesta; it forms the 9th chapter of the Yaçna. But the fact that, while utterly alien to the rest of the Yaçna, it is truly a Yasht—being in honour of a special personage—induced me to defer its consideration till now.

banishes death, answered me: 'I am, O Zarathustra, Homa, the holy one, who banishes death. Invoke me, O Çpitama,[1] extract me to eat me, praise me to celebrate me, in order that others, who desire their good, may praise me in their turn.' Then Zarathustra said: 'Adoration to Homa! Who is the mortal, Homa, who first in the present world extracted thee for sacrifice? What holiness did he acquire? What advantage accrued to him thereby?'" Homa replies that Vivanghat was the first to extract him for sacrifice, and that he acquired the advantage of becoming father to the glorious Yima, in whose reign "there was neither cold nor (excessive) heat, nor old age nor death, nor envy produced by the Dêva. Fathers and sons alike had the figure of men of fifteen years of age, as long as Yima reigned." Similar questions are then put by Zarathustra regarding the second, third, and fourth mortals who worshipped Homa, and similar replies are given. All had distinguished sons; but the last, Puruchaspa, was rewarded beyond all others by the birth of Zarathustra himself. Homa thereupon magnifies Zarathustra in the usual style of the later parts of the Zend-Avesta, and Zarathustra, who is not to be outdone in the language of compliment, thus addresses him in return: "Adoration to Homa! Homa, the good, has been well made; he has been made just; made good; he bestows health; he has a beautiful person; he does good; he is victorious; of the colour of gold; his branches are inclined to be eaten; he is excellent; and

[1] The term Çpitama, usually coupled with the name of Zarathustra, is translated by Spiegel "holy," but is treated by Haug and Burnouf as a proper name. There are indications that it may have been the family name of the prophet. See Av., vol. iii. p. 219, *n.*

he is the most celestial way for the soul. O thou who art of the colour of gold, I ask thee for prudence, energy, victory, beauty, the force that penetrates the whole body, greatness which is spread over the whole figure;" and so forth, through several other by no means modest petitions. In a more formal manner Zarathustra then demands of Homa the following favours: 1st, the excellent abode of the saints; 2dly, the duration of his body; 3dly, a long life; 4thly and 5thly, to be able to annihilate hatred and strike down the cruel man; 6thly, that they (the faithful ?) may see robbers, assassins, and wolves before being seen by them. After this, Homa is praised generally. He gives many good gifts, among them posterity to sterile mothers, and husbands to spinsters of advanced years. He is finally requested, if there should be in the village or the province a man who is hurtful to others, to take from him the power of walking, to darken his intelligence, and to break his heart.[1]

The Yashts are succeeded by various pieces, of which one relates to Parsee eschatology, and the others, celebrating numerous supernatural objects of worship, do not call for any special remark. After these we come to the so-called Patets, which belong to the most recent portions of the book, and indicate a highly developed consciousness of sin, and of the need of divine forgiveness. They correspond in tone and character to the General Confession which has been placed by the Church of England in the forefront of her Liturgy, except that they contain long enumerations of the several classes of offences for which pardon

[1] For another Yasht, see Book 1, pt. 1, ch. i.

is to be entreated. One of them, after such a catalogue, thus addresses the Deity :—

"Whatever was the wish of the Creator Ormazd, and I ought to have thought and did not think, whatever I ought to have said and did not say, whatever I ought to have done and did not do,—I repent of these sins, with thoughts, words, and works, both the corporeal and the spiritual, the earthly and the heavenly sins, with the three words.[1] Forgive, O Lord ; I repent of the sin.

"Whatever was the wish of Ahriman, and I ought not to have thought and yet did think, whatever I ought not to have said and yet did say, whatever I ought not to have done and yet did, —I repent of these sins with thoughts, words, and works, both the corporeal and the spiritual, the earthly and the heavenly sins, with the three words. Forgive, O Lord ; I repent of the sin."[2]

Another of these Patets contains the following comprehensive formula :—

"In whatever way I may have sinned, against whomsoever I may have sinned, howsoever I may have sinned, I repent of it with thoughts, words, and works ; forgive !"[3]

The same Patet contains a confession of faith, which, as it alludes to the several dogmas that were held to be of first-rate importance in the creed of the true disciple of Zarathustra, may be worth quoting before we quit the subject :—

"I believe in the existence, the purity, and the indubitable truth of the good Mazdayaçna faith, and in the Creator Ormazd and the Amschaspands, in the exaction of an account, and in the resurrection and the new body. I remain in this faith, and

[1] That is, with thoughts, words, and works.
[2] Av., vol. iii. p. 211.—Khorda-Avesta, xlv. 8, 9.
[3] Av., vol. iii. p. 216.—Khorda-Avesta, xlvi. 1.

confess that it is not to be doubted, as Ormazd imparted it to Zertuscht, Zertuscht to Fraschaostra and Jâmâçp, as Âderbât, the son of Mahresfand, ordered and purified it, as the just Paoiryotkaeshas and the Deçtûrs in family succession have brought it to us, and I thence am acquainted with it." [1]

In more than one respect this confession is interesting. First, it asserts the excellence and the unquestionable infallibility of the traditional faith in terms which a Catholic could hardly improve upon. Secondly, it brings before us in succinct form the leading points included in that faith—the Creator, at the head of all the created world; the seven Amshaspands or Amesha-Çpentas, heavenly powers of whom Ormazd himself was chief; the judgment to be expected after death, and the strict account then to be required; lastly, the general resurrection with its new body. Proceeding next to the manner in which this faith had been handed down from generation to generation, we have first the cardinal doctrine that God himself was the direct teacher of his prophet; after that, a statement that the prophet communicated it to others, from whom it descended to still later followers, one of whom is declared to have "ordered and purified it." Thus the consciousness of subsequent additions to the original law is betrayed. Thus amended, the priests, or Deçtûrs, are said to have transmitted it to the time of the speaker, the authority of the ecclesiastical order in the interpretation of the sacred records being thus carefully maintained.

How many generations had elapsed before the transmission of the law could thus become the subject of deliberate incorporation among recognised dogmas,

[1] Av., vol. iii. p. 218.—Khorda-Avesta, xlvi. 28.

it is impossible to say. Undoubtedly, however, we stand a long way off—not only in actual time, but in modes of thought and forms of worship—from the ancient Iranian prophet. The change from the faith of Peter to that of St Augustine is not greater than that from the faith of Zarathustra's rude disciples to that of the subtle, self-conscious priests who composed these later formularies, or the laity who accepted them. Still, after all has been said, after it has been freely admitted that subsequent speculation, or imagination, or the influence of neighbouring creeds, introduced a host of minor spirits or quasi-gods, of whom Zarathustra knew nothing, it must also be emphatically asserted that the God of Zarathustra never loses, among the multitude of his associates, either his supremacy or his unique and transcendent attributes. While in the Gâthâs Ahura-Mazda alone is worshipped; while in the later chapters of the Yaçna many other personages receive a more or less limited homage along with him; while in the Yashts these personages are singled out one after another for what appears unbounded adoration,—the original God invariably maintains his rank as the Creator; the one Supreme Lord of mankind, as of all his other creatures; the instructor of Zarathustra; the Being compared to whom all others stand related as the thing made towards its Maker. Theism does not in the Avesta pass into polytheism. Strictly speaking, its spirit is monotheistic throughout, though we might often be betrayed into thinking the contrary by the extravagance of its language. Nor can I discover in its pages the doctrine which some have held to be contained in it, namely, that above Ahura-Mazda, some-

where in the dark background of the universe, was a God still greater than him, the ultimate Power to which even he must yield, Zrvâna-Akaraṅa, or Infinite Time. The very name of this highly abstract being appears but rarely in the Avesta, and never, so far as I am able to discover, in the character thus assigned to him. Ahura-Mazda remains throughout the God of Gods; his is the highest and most sacred name known to his worshippers, and none can compare with him, the Infinite Creator, in greatness, in glory, or in power.

It is not to be expected that, in the early stage of social progress at which a great part at least of the Avesta was written, its moral doctrines should be altogether faultless. Nevertheless, it may well sustain a comparison in this respect with the codes which have been received as authoritative by other nations. Subject to the drawback, common to all theologically-influenced systems of ethics, of laying as much stress upon correct belief and the diligent performance of the customary rites as upon the really fundamental duties of men, the Zend-Avesta upholds a high standard of morality, and honestly seeks to inculcate upon believers the immense importance of leading an upright and virtuous life. Such a life alone is pleasing to God; such a life alone can insure a safe passage over the hazardous bridge by which the soul must pass to Paradise. Not only are the more obvious virtues—respect for life, careful observance of promises, industrious conduct—sedulously enjoined on the faithful Parsee, but some others, less obvious and too frequently overlooked, are urged upon them. The seducer is bound to provide both for the infant he

has called into existence, and for its mother, at least for a certain period. Domestic animals are not forgotten, and humanity towards these dependent creatures is commanded in a series of precepts, the spirit of which would do honour to any age. And, in general, the blamelessness required in thoughts, words, and works imposed on the devout Mazdayaçna a comprehensive attention to the many ways in which he might lapse from virtue, and held before him an exalted conception of moral purity.

Yet, when all this has been said, it must still be admitted that the Zend-Avesta hides its light, such as it is, under a bushel. Such is the number of supramundane spirits to be lauded, such the mass of ceremonies to be attended to, so great the proportion of space devoted to guarding against legal impurities as compared with that consigned to preventing moral evil, that the impression left upon the minds of unbelieving readers is on the whole far from favourable. Morality has, in fact, got buried under theology. The trivialities, inanities, and repetitions that abound in the sacred text draw off the mind from the occasional excellences of thought and expression which it contains. Thus he who toils through the verbose Fargards of the Vendidad, the obscure chapters of the older and younger Yaçna, or the panegyrical rhapsodies of the Yashts, will find but little to reward his search. With the Gâthâs indeed it is otherwise. These are full of interest, and not quite devoid of a simple grandeur. But as a whole, the Avesta is a mine which, among vast heaps of rubbish, discloses but here and there a grain of gold.

SECTION VI.—THE KORAN.[1]

Alone among the Scriptures of the several great religions, the Koran is the work of a single author. It is, therefore, characterised by greater uniformity of style, subject, and doctrine than the sacred collections of other nations. Considerable as the difference is between its earlier and its later Suras, a consistent line of thought is visible throughout, and pious Moslems are free from the difficulty that has always beset Christian theologians of "harmonising" contradictory passages both supposed to emanate from God. There are, indeed, earlier revelations inconsistent with later ones; but in this case, the former are held to have been abrogated by the latter. Mediocre in the order of its thought, diffuse in style, abundant in repetitions, there are few books more calculated to task the patience of a conscientious reader. But we must recollect, in judging it, that its author did not write it, and very possibly never contemplated its existence as a complete work. He published it from time to time as occasion required, much as a modern statesman would announce his views by means of speeches, pamphlets, or election addresses.

When a revelation arrived, Mahomet in the first instance dictated it to his secretary Zaid, who wrote it on palm-leaves or skins, or tablets of any kind

[1] Complete translations of the Koran into English have been made by Sale and by Rodwell. Considerable portions have been rendered into German by Sprenger, "Das Leben und die Lehre des Mohammed;" and by Gustav Weil, "Mohammed der Prophet;" and into English by Dr Muir, in his "Life of Mahomet."

that might be at hand. Of the remaining Moslems, some took copies, but many more committed the revelations to memory; the Arab memory being remarkably retentive. Under the reign of Abu Bekr, the prophet's successor, Omar, finding that some one who knew a piece of the Koran had been killed, suggested that the whole should be collected. The suggestion was adopted, and Abu Bekr intrusted the work of collection to the secretary Zaid. The Koran was then put together, not only from the leaves that had been left by Mahomet, and thrown without any regard to order into a chest, but also from the fragments, either written or preserved in the memory, that were contributed by individual believers. The copy thus made was not published, but was committed for safe custody to Hafsa, daughter of Omar, and one of the widows of the prophet. She kept it during the ten years of her father Omar's caliphate. But as there were no official and authorised copies of this genuine Koran, it came to pass that the various missionaries who were sent as teachers to the newly conquered countries repeated it differently, and that various readings crept into the transcripts in use. Hence serious threatenings of division and scandal among the Moslems. The caliph Othman, foreseeing the danger, appointed a commission, with the secretary Zaid at its head, to copy the copy of Hafsa and return it to her, their duty being to determine on differences of reading, and to be careful to restore the Meccan idiom where it had been departed from in any of the versions. Several copies were made by the commissioners, of which one was kept at Medina, and the others sent to the great military stations.

This was the official text, prepared about A.H. 25–30, and after its establishment, all private copies or fragments of the Koran were ordered by Othman to be destroyed.[1] The original Koran, which Mahomet did but reproduce, is supposed by those who accept it as divine to be preserved in heaven, in the very presence of its original author, on an enormous table.

In the Koran, as arranged by Zaid, there is apparently no fixed principle in the order of the Suras or chapters. In the main, the longest Suras come first, but even this rule is not adhered to consistently. Of chronological arrangement there is not a trace, and it has been left to the ingenuity of European scholars to endeavour to discover approximately the date of the several revelations. Of some, the occasions of their publication are known, but in the case of the great majority, nothing beyond a conjectural arrangement can be attained.

The principal themes with which the Koran is occupied are the unity of God; his attributes; the several prophets preceding Mahomet, whom he has sent to convert unbelievers; the joys of Paradise and terrors of hell; and the legislative edicts promulgated for the government of the Arabs under the new religion. Of these several subjects, the first two occupy a predominant place in the earliest revelations. Legends of prophets, of whom Mahomet recognised a considerable number, form one of the standing dishes set before the faithful during all but the very beginning of his career. He was also fond

[1] L. L. M., vol. iii., Vorrede.—Sale, preliminary discourse, p. 46.—K., p. vii.

of speaking of the contrast between the position of believers and sceptics in a future state; but he seems at first to have expected a temporal judgment on his Meccan opponents, and afterwards to have been contented with awaiting the divine vengeance in another world. Legislation, of course, belongs only to that portion of the Koran which was revealed after the Hegira.

A few specimens will be quite sufficient to give a notion both of the earlier and later style of this sacred volume. Here is a Sura revealed at Mecca during the first struggles of the prophet's mind, when it was completely possessed with the awfulness of the new truth:—

"O thou enfolded in thy mantle, stand up all night, except a small portion of it, for prayer. Half; or curtail the half a little, —or add to it: and with measured tone intone the Koran, for we shall devolve on thee weighty words. Verily, at the coming of night are *devout*[1] impressions strongest, and words are most collected; but in the daytime thou hast continual employ—and commemorate the name of thy Lord, and devote thyself to him with entire devotion. . . . . Of a truth, thy Lord knoweth that thou prayest almost two-thirds, or half, or a third of the night, as do a part of thy followers."[2]

This is the opening Sura of the Koran:—

"Praise be to God, Lord of the worlds! the compassionate! the merciful! King on the day of reckoning! Thee *only* do we worship, and to thee do we cry for help. Guide thou us on the straight path, the path of those to whom thou hast been gracious; with whom thou art not angry, and who go not astray."[3]

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[1] Italics, here and elsewhere, in Rodwell.
[2] K., p. 7.—Sura, 73. [3] K., p. 11.—Sura, 1.

In the Sura now to be quoted we find an allusion to one of the prophets whom Mahomet regarded as precursors—the prophet Saleh, who had been sent to a people called Themoud to bid them worship God. The legend associated with his name is, that he appealed to a she-camel as a proof of his divine mission, commanding the people to let her go at large and do her no hurt. Some of the Themoudites believed; but they were ridiculed by the sceptical chiefs of the nation, whose wickedness went so far as actually to hamstring the apostolic camel. Hereupon an earthquake overtook them by night, and they were all found dead in the morning.[1] Such things were Mahomet's stock-in-trade; and the following Sura exemplifies the mixture of his early poetic thoughts with the prosaic narratives which did duty so constantly during the maturity of his apostleship:—

"By the Sun and his noonday brightness! by the Moon when she followeth him! by the Day when it revealeth his glory! by the Night when it enshroudeth him! by the Heaven and him who built it! by the Earth and him who spread it forth! by a Soul and him who balanced it, and breathed into it its wickedness and its piety! blessed now is he who hath kept it pure, and undone is he who hath corrupted it!

"Themoud in his impiety rejected the message of the Lord, when the greatest wretch among them rushed up:—Said the apostle of God to them,—The camel of God! let her drink. But they treated him as an impostor and hamstrung her. So their Lord destroyed them for their crime, and visited all alike: nor feared he the issue."[2]

The same Sura which contains the history of Saleh, prophet of Themoud, refers also to various other divine

[1] K., p. 376.—Sura, 7. 71–77. [2] K., p. 24.—Sura, 91.

messengers who had fulfilled the same office of announcing the judgments of God. Mahomet's general view of the prophetic function seems to be expressed in these words:—

"Every nation hath its set time. And when their time is come they shall not retard it an hour; and they shall not advance it. O children of Adam! there shall come to you Apostles from among yourselves, rehearsing my signs to you; and whoso shall fear God and do good works, no fear shall be upon them, neither shall they be put to grief. But they who charge our signs with falsehood, and turn away from them in their pride, shall be inmates of the fire: for ever shall they abide therein."[1]

The prophets whom he mentions in this Sura are Noah, who was sent to warn his people of the Deluge; Houd, sent to Ad, an unbelieving nation whom God cut off, with the exception of those who had accepted Houd; Saleh, sent to Themoud as above related; Lot, sent to Sodom to warn it against sin; Shoaib, sent to Madian, a people of which the unbelieving members were destroyed by earthquake; Moses, sent with signs to Pharaoh and his nobles, as also to the Israelites, of whom some worshipped the calf, and were overtaken by the wrath of their Lord.[2] In another Sura he makes mention of other prophets besides these; namely, of John the Baptist, Jesus of Nazareth, Abraham, Ishmael, and Enoch.[3]

His view of Jesus Christ is peculiar and interesting. He invariably treats him with the highest respect as a servant of God and his own precursor, but he is careful to protest that the opinion of his divinity was not

[1] K., p. 371.—Sura, 7. 32–34.
[2] K., p. 375–386.—Sura, 7. 57–154.
[3] K., p. 127 ff.—Sura, 19.

held by Jesus himself, and was a baseless invention of his followers. The notion that God could have a son seems to him a gross profanation, and he often recurs to it in terms of the strongest reprobation. Thus he endeavours to claim Christ as a genuine Moslem, and to include Christianity within the pale of the new faith. A Christian who adopted it might continue, indeed must continue, to believe everything in the Old and New Testaments, except such passages as expressly assert the incarnation and divinity of Jesus. Yet Mahomet's own version of this prophet's conception involves a supernatural element, and only differs from that of Luke in not asserting the paternity of God.

"And make mention in the Book," he says, "of Mary, when she went apart from her family, eastward, and took a veil *to shroud herself* from them, and we sent our spirit to her, and he took before her the form of a perfect man. She said: 'I fly for refuge from thee to the God of Mercy! If thou fearest him, *begone from me.*' He said: 'I am only a messenger of thy Lord, that I may bestow on thee a holy son.' She said: 'How shall I have a son, when man hath never touched me, and I am not unchaste.' He said: 'So shall it be. Thy Lord hath said: easy is this with me, and we will make him a sign to mankind and a mercy from us. For it is a thing decreed.' And she conceived him, and retired with him to a far-off place."[1]

Her virginity is expressly asserted in another place, where she is described as "Mary, the daughter of

[1] K., p. 128.—Sura, 19. 16–22.

Imran, who kept her maidenhood, and into whose womb we breathed of our spirit."[1]

When the child was born, his mother was accused of unchastity, but the infant prophet at once opened his mouth and declared his prophetic character. From this narrative it appears that, in Mahomet's opinion, Jesus was neither begotten by a human father, nor was the son of God. He finds a *via media* in the doctrine that he was created, like Adam, by an express exertion of the power of the Almighty. "He created him of dust: He then said to him, 'Be,' and he was."[2] And again, in the Sura above quoted: "It beseemeth not God to beget a son, Glory be to him! when he decreeth a thing, he only saith to it, Be, and it is."[3]

He is very indignant against those who hold the doctrine of the incarnation, which he apparently considered as equivalent to that of physical generation by the Deity, and which, under any aspect, is certainly shocking to a genuine monotheist.

"They say: 'The God of Mercy hath gotten offspring.' Now have ye done a monstrous thing! Almost might the very heavens be rent thereat, and the earth cleave asunder, and the mountains fall down in fragments, that they ascribe a son to the God of Mercy, when it beseemeth not the God of Mercy to beget a son!"[4] "And they say, 'God hath a son:' No! Praise be to him! But his whatever is in the heavens and the earth! All obeyeth him, sole Maker

[1] K., p. 604.—Sura, 66. 12. She is called the daughter of Imran, by a confusion between Mary, mother of Jesus, and Miriam, sister of Moses.

[2] K., p. 502.—Sura, 3. 52.

[3] K., p. 130.—Sura, 19. 36.

[4] K., p. 135.—Sura, 19. 91-93.

of the heavens and of the earth! And when he decreeth a thing, he only saith to it, Be, and it is."[1]

Mahomet's conception of his own character is most clearly expressed in the seventh Sura, where, after enumerating some of the prophets who had gone before him (as already related), he proceeds to describe a supposed dialogue between Moses and God, in which the Deity speaks thus:—

"My chastisement shall fall on whom I will, and my mercy embraceth all things, and I write it down for those who shall fear me, and pay the alms, and believe in our signs, who shall follow the Apostle, the unlettered Prophet—whom they shall find described with them in the Law and Evangel. What is right will he enjoin them, and forbid them what is wrong, and will allow them healthful viands and prohibit the impure, and will ease them of their burden, and of the yokes which were upon them; and those who shall believe in him, and strengthen him, and help him, and follow the light which hath been sent down with him,—these are they with whom it shall be well."

The revelation to Moses now ceases, and God continues to address Mahomet with the usual preliminary "Say:"—

"Say to them: O men! Verily I am God's apostle to you all: whose is the kingdom of the Heavens and of the Earth! There is no God but he! He maketh alive and killeth! Therefore believe on God and his apostle—the unlettered Prophet—who believeth in God and his word. And follow him that ye may be guided aright."[2]

Mahomet liked to describe himself as unlettered, and thus to obtain for the scriptural knowledge and

[1] K., p. 445.—Sura, 2. 110, 111. [2] K., p. 386.—Sura, 7. 155–158.

literary skill displayed in the Koran the credit of its being due to inspiration.

In another place he again describes his prophetic character in the following strain :—

"Muhammad is not the father of any man among you, but he is the Apostle of God and the seal of the prophets: and God knoweth all things. . . . . O Prophet! we have sent thee to be a witness, and a herald of glad tidings, and a warner; and one who, through his own permission, summoneth to God, and a light-giving torch." [1]

A conspicuous feature of the Koran to which allusion has not yet been made is its frequent reference to the pleasures of Paradise to be enjoyed by the faithful, and the pains of hell to be suffered by the infidels. The day of judgment is continually held out as an encouragement to the former, and a terror to the latter. The 56th Sura contains a description of heaven which is enough to make the mouth of good Moslems water. "The people of the right hand" are to be happy; those of the left hand, wretched. The former are to have "gardens of delight," with "inwrought couches," whereon reclining, "aye-blooming youths" are to bring them "flowing wine" of the best celestial vintage. They are to enjoy their favourite fruits, and to eat whatever birds they long for. "Houris with large dark eyes," and "ever virgins," never growing old, are to supply them with the pleasures of love, so strangely overlooked in the Christian pictures of heavenly life. On the other side, we have "the people of the left hand," who are to be tormented with "pestilential winds" and "scalding water," and are to live "in the shadow of

[1] K., p. 567.—Sura, 33. 40, 44, 45.

a black smoke," with the fruit of a bitter tree to eat and boiling water to drink.[1] The prophet delights in warning his enemies of their coming fate. "Verily," says God in another place, "we have got ready the flame for the infidels."[2] "O Prophet!" we read elsewhere, "make war on the infidels, and hypocrites, and deal rigorously with them. Hell shall be their abode! and wretched the passage to it!"[3] "God promiseth the hypocritical men and women, and the unbelievers, the fire of hell—therein shall they abide—this their sufficing portion!"[4] Some, who had declined to march with the Prophet from Medina on account of the heat, are sternly reminded that "a fiercer heat will be the fire of hell."[5]

In contradistinction to the deplorable state of the hypocrites and unbelievers—blind in this world and destined to suffer eternally in the next—we have a pleasing picture of the condition of the faithful Moslems:—

"Muhammad is the Apostle of God; and his comrades are vehement against the infidels, *but* full of tenderness among themselves. Thou mayst see them bowing down, prostrating themselves, imploring favours from God, and his acceptance. Their tokens are on their faces, the marks of their prostrations. This is their picture in the Law and their picture in the Evangel; they are as the seed which putteth forth its stalk; then strengtheneth it, and it groweth stout, and riseth upon its stem, rejoicing the husbandman—that the infidels may be wrathful at them. To such of them as believe and do the things that are right, hath God promised forgiveness and a noble recompense."[6]

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[1] K., p. 60.—Sura, 56.
[2] K., p. 598.—Sura, 48. 13.
[3] K., p. 603.—Sura, 66. 9.
[4] K., p. 621.—Sura, 9. 69.
[5] K., p. 623.—Sura, 9. 82.
[6] K., p. 601.—Sura, 48. 29.

Section VII.—The Old Testament.

Before entering upon the comparative examination of the Hebrew Canon, it is necessary to say a few words of the extraordinary race who were its authors. There is probably no other book of which it may be said, with the same depth and fulness of meaning, that it is the work of a nation and the reflection of a nation's life. The history of the Bible and the history of the Jews are more intimately bound up together than is that of any other nation with that of any other book. During the period of their political existence as a separate people they wrote the Canon. During the long period of political annihilation which has succeeded, they have not ceased to write commentaries on the Canon. This one great production has filled the imaginations, has influenced the intellect, has fed the religious ardour of each succeeding generation of Jews. To name the Canonical Scriptures, and the endless series of writings suggested by them or based upon them, would be almost to sum up the results of the literary activity of the Hebrew race.

Our first historical acquaintance with the Hebrews brings them before us as obtaining by conquest, and then inhabiting, that narrow strip of territory bordering the Mediterranean Sea which is known as Palestine. Their own legends, indeed, carry us back to a still earlier period, when they lived as slaves in Egypt; but on these, from the character of the narrative, very little reliance can be placed. The story, gradually

becoming less and less mythical, tells us, what is probably true, that they overcame the native inhabitants of Palestine in war, and seized upon their land; that they then passed through an anarchical period, during which the centre of authority seems to have been lost, and the national unity was in no small danger of being destroyed, had not vigorous and able leaders interposed to save it; that, under the pressure of these circumstances, they adopted a monarchical constitution, by which the dangers of this time of anarchy were at least to a large extent averted, and the discordant elements brought into subjection to a common centre. Thus united, the Jewish monarchy rapidly attained a considerable height of splendour and of power. Surrounding nations fell under its sway, and it took rank as one of the great powers which divided Western Asia. But this glory was not to last long. The monarchy, broken up into two hostile parts by the folly of Rehoboam, lost alike its unity and its strength; and after a long series of kings, whom it is needless to enumerate, both its branches fell victims, at separate times, the one to Shalmaneser, king of the Assyrians, the other to Nebuchadnezzar, king of the Chaldees. The latter event, while it put an end to the very existence of the Jewish nation as an independent political power—for it was but a fitful independence which was recovered under the Asmoneans—marks an epoch which severs the history of the Jews into two periods, distinguished from one another by the completely different character borne by the people in each. It is customary, for theological purposes, to represent the religious development of the Jews as pervaded by a fundamental unity. They

are supposed to have known and worshipped the true God from the beginning, to have been sharply marked off from the rest of the world by their strict monotheism, and to have been unfaithful to their inherited creed only when they refused to recognise Christ and his apostles as its authorised interpreters. Their own records tell a very different story. According to these, the religion of the Jews, like that of other nations, progressed, changed, improved, underwent purification and alteration, and was, in its earlier forms, not much unlike that of the surrounding heathens. Their leaders, indeed, and all those whom their Scriptures uphold as examples of excellence, worshipped a national God, Jehovah, whom they may have considered the only god who enjoyed actual existence and possessed actual power. But whether or not this were the case, he was, for all practical purposes, simply the tutelary deity of the Hebrews. In his name the conquerors of Palestine pillaged, murdered, and inflicted cruelties on the vanquished; to him they looked for aid in their belligerent undertakings; to him they offered the first-fruits of victory. It was under his direct leadership that they professed to subdue the heathens, and to attain national security. The ark was his dwelling, and it could only bring destruction to the Philistines, who were not under the protection of its inmate. And when the Jews asked to be placed under the rule of a monarch, they were told by the mouthpiece of Jehovah that it was his divine government which they were rejecting. The morality of the chiefs who conducted the invasion and subjugation of Palestine was not one whit superior to that of their enemies, nor

was the god on whose power they relied of an essentially higher nature than many other national or local divinities who were worshipped by other nations. They were the rude leaders of a rude people worshipping a rude deity. His character was such as we might expect the tutelary divinity of a tribe of wandering and unsettled Bedouins to be. Having to establish their right to a permanent home and an organised government by force of arms, it was only natural that they should represent their God as favouring the exploits of those arms, and even urging them on to the most ruthless exercise of the rights of conquerors. It was natural that even their most revolting acts should be placed under the especial patronage of this approving god. It was natural, too, that when the conquest had been at least in great part effected, while yet the anarchical and semi-savage condition of the victors continued (as it did more or less until after the accession of David), and internal strife took the place of external warfare, the national god should become to some extent a party-god; should favour one section against another, and even excite the ferocious passions of those to whose side he inclined. The god of Moses, of Joshua, and the Judges was thus a passionate, relentless, and cruel partisan. No doubt the facts were not precisely such as they are represented to us by the writers in the Old Testament, since in the internecine conflicts which occasionally broke forth we may assume that each side claimed for itself the approbation of Jehovah. But still the story of the Hebrew annals is clear enough to show us the semi-savage character of the people in these early days, and their utter failure to

form that lofty conception of the Deity with which they have been so largely credited by believers in the supernatural inspiration of their historical records.

The primitive conception entertained at this period, which corresponded with that generally found among uncivilised nations, was improved and elevated to some extent during the age of comparatively settled government which succeeded. As the Israelites advanced in the practice of the arts, in the possession of wealth, in the cultivation of the literary or musical attainments that refine domestic life, in the peaceful organisation of a society that had become more industrial and less warlike, their idea of Jehovah underwent the modifications which these changes imply. The god of Samuel is widely different from the god of Isaiah or Jeremiah. Whether the popular notion had risen to the height attained by these prophets may indeed be doubted; but this too must have altered in order to make such prophets possible. Yet, in spite of the comparative improvement, there are abundant indications during the kingly period that the old Hebrew deity still retained the ferocious characteristics by which he had formerly been distinguished. Elijah's patron is gracious enough to his own adherents, but the attributes of mercy or gentleness towards human beings generally are undiscoverable in his character. And the deeds of blood which pious monarchs from time to time were guilty of in his honour, and which received his approbation, show that if the process of his civilisation had begun, it was still very far from being completed.

But the special glory of the Jewish race is supposed to consist even more in the fact that this God, such as

he was, stood alone, than in the excellence of the manner in which they conceived of his nature. The constancy of their monotheism, amid the polytheism of surrounding nations, has appeared to subsequent generations so marvellous as to require a revelation to account for it. The facts, however, as related to us by the Jews themselves, do not warrant the supposition that monotheism actually was the creed of the people until after the Captivity. It appears, indeed, that that form of belief was held by those who are depicted to us as the most eminent and the most virtuous among them, and it would seem that there was generally a considerable party who adhered to the worship of Jehovah, and at times succeeded in forcing it upon the nation at large. But that Jehovism was the authorised and established national religion, and that every other form and variety of faith was an authorised innovation, is a far wider conclusion than the facts will warrant us in drawing. This, no doubt, and nothing less than this, is the contention of the historical writers of the Old Testament; but even their own statements, made as they are under the influence of the strongest Jehovistic bias, point with tolerable clearness to a different conclusion. They inform us that while the most ancient leaders of the Israelites who conducted them to the promised land, the distinguished Judges who from time to time arose, and all the most virtuous kings, belonged to the religion of Jehovah, the people, notwithstanding these great examples, were continually guilty of relapses into idolatry of the most flagrant kind. This tendency manifested itself so early, and reappeared with such persistence during the whole history of the Israelites

of both branches up to the destruction of their respective monarchies, that we cannot, consistently with the admitted facts, suppose that Jehovism had at any time taken very deep root in the mind of the people. They seem, on the contrary, to have been readily swayed to and fro by the example of the reigning monarch. Whether indeed they sincerely adopted monotheism under a monotheistic sovereign, may perhaps be doubted; but the emphatic denunciations of the Biblical writers leave us no room to question the perfect sincerity of their idolatry. All therefore that we can be justified in inferring from what they tell us is, that a succession of priests and prophets maintained the faith of Jehovah from age to age, and that from time to time a sovereign arose who favoured their views, and did all in his power, sometimes by fair means and not unfrequently by foul, to advance the interests of the Jehovistic party. Indian history acquaints us with very similar fluctuations in the religion of a province, according as the priests of one or the other contending sect succeeded in obtaining influence over the mind of the reigning Rajah. But although we maintain that monotheism was not, previous to the Captivity, the popular religion of the Jews, we need not go the length of asserting that there was no difference in their minds between Jehovah and the other deities whom they adopted from surrounding nations. Jehovah was unquestionably the national god, who was held to extend a peculiar protection over the Hebrew race. Nor does it follow that those who betook themselves to some idolatrous *cultus* necessarily abandoned that of Jehovah. Both might well have been carried on together, and there

is abundant evidence that the Jews of this period had much of that elasticity which characterises polytheism, and makes it ever ready to add new members to its pantheon without discarding old favourites. So far as there was a national worship carried on by a national priesthood, Jehovah must have been its object. But we are not therefore compelled to imagine that the nation had adopted Jehovism in so solemn and binding a manner as to render its abandonment a gross violation of their fundamental institutions. No doubt, according to the Scriptural writers, it was a deliberate breach of the original constitution to forsake, even for a moment, the exclusive service of the national god for that of any other deity whatsoever. But the supernatural origin assigned by them to this original constitution throws a doubt on their assertions, while the facts they report serve to increase it. For while we learn that Jehovah was deserted by one generation after another in favour of more popular rivals, much to the indignation of his priests and prophets, we do not perceive any traces of a consciousness on the part of the idolaters that they were guilty of infidelity to fundamental and unchangeable laws. They rather appear to have acted in mere levity, and the repeated objurgations of the Jehovistic party would tend to the conclusion that the people were not aware of any binding obligation to adhere to the worship of this deity to the exclusion of that of every other. The efforts of the Jehovists may indeed show that *they* believed such an obligation to exist; but not that their opponents were equally aware of it. Moreover, we are not without some more positive testimony which strongly favours this view of their mutual

relations. Under the reign of the pious, and no doubt credulous, Josiah, a certain priest professed to have discovered a "book of the law" mysteriously hidden in the temple. Without discussing in this place what book this may have been, it is plain that it inculcated Jehovism under the penalty of curses similar to those found in Deuteronomy, and it is plain too that its contents caused the monarch a painful surprise, which expressed itself by his rending his clothes and sending a commission to "inquire of the Lord" "concerning the words of this book that is found." Now is it possible to suppose that the words of such a book as this could have inflicted on Josiah so great a shock, or have required the appointment of a special commission to inquire concerning them, if it had been a matter of familiar and general knowledge among the Jews that their forefathers had solemnly adopted Jehovism as the only lawful national creed, invoking upon themselves those very curses which the most devout of monarchs was now unable to hear without astonishment and alarm? And how are we to explain the production of this book by the priests as a new discovery? If it had been merely the rediscovery of a lost volume, would the language of the narrative have been at all appropriate? Must not Josiah in that case have rejoiced at the restoration to Judah of so precious a treasure, however much he might have regretted the failure of the nation to observe its precepts? The difficulty of supposing such facts to have been forgotten is equally great. It would be scarcely possible to imagine that not only the people, but the priests, could at any period have lost all memory of the fact that they were bound, under the most terrible penalties, to

adhere to the faith of Jehovah. At least the spiritual advisers of so religious a monarch must have been well aware that their own creed formed an essential part of the Jewish constitution; and we cannot doubt that they would carefully have impressed this fact on their willing pupil, not as a startling disclosure made only after he had been seventeen years on the throne and had attained the age of twenty-five, but as one of his earliest and most familiar lessons. In fact, this sudden discovery, in some secret recess of the temple, of a hitherto unknown volume, concerning whose claims to authority or antiquity the writers preserve a mysterious silence, rather suggests the notion of a Jehovistic *coup d'état*, prepared by the zeal of Hilkiah the priest and Shaphan the scribe. A long time had passed since the accession of the king. His favourable dispositions were well known. Since the eighth year of his reign at least he had been under the influence of the priests, and in the twelfth he had entered (no doubt under their directions) upon that career of persecuting violence which was usual with pious monarchs in Judæa.[1] His mind was undoubtedly predisposed to receive with implicit confidence any statements they might make. Hence, if Hilkiah and his associates had conceived the idea of compiling, from materials at their command, a book which, while recapitulating some events in the ancient history of Israel, should represent those events in a light favourable to their designs, they could hardly have chosen a better moment for the execution of such a scheme.

[1] So in 2 Chron. xxiv. 3–7. But in 2 Kings xxii. 1, 2, there is no mention of the period at which "he began to seek after the God of David."

That they actually did this, it would be going beyond the evidence in our possession to assert. It may be that the book was an old one; and in any case, it is unnecessary to suppose that it was an original composition of Hilkiah's, palmed off upon the king as ancient. All that appears to me clearly to follow from the terms of the narrative is, that the law which this book contained (evidently the law of Jehovah) had not hitherto been regarded as the established law of the country, and that the production of this volume, in which its claims to that dignity were emphatically asserted, and its violation represented as entailing the most grievous curses, was one of the plans taken by the priestly party to procure for it the recognition of that supremacy which they declared it had actually enjoyed in the days of their forefathers. But although the history of Israel has been written by adherents of this party, and we are unfortunately precluded from checking their statements by any document recounting the same events from the point of view of their opponents, their records, biassed as they are, clearly show us a nation whose favourite and ordinary creed was not monotheism; which was ever ready to adopt with fervour the idolatrous practices of its neighbours; and which was not converted to pure and exclusive monotheism till after the terrible lesson of the Captivity in Babylon.

This great event was turned to excellent account by the priests and prophets of Jehovah. Instead of regarding it as a natural consequence of the political relations of Judæa with more powerful empires, they represented it as the fulfilment of the penalties threatened by Jehovah for infidelity towards himself.

And as this view offered a plausible explanation of their unparalleled misfortunes, it was naturally accepted by many as the true solution of sufferings so difficult to reconcile with the protection supposed to be accorded by their national god. Under these circumstances a double process went on during their compulsory residence in heathendom. Great numbers, who were either not Jehovists, or whose Jehovism was but lukewarm, gradually adapted themselves to their situation among idolaters, and became at length indistinguishably fused, as the ten tribes had been, with the alien races. But a few remained faithful to their God. These few it was who formed the whole of the nation which, when return was possible, returned to their native soil. Those who were not inspired by a deep sense of the sanctity of their national religion; those to whom the restoration of their national rites was not the one object of overwhelming importance; those whose hopes of national restoration were of a temporal rather than a spiritual nature, had no sufficient motive to return to their native soil. Jerusalem could have no attractions for them which Babylon did not possess. Thus, by a natural process, the most ardent, the most spiritual, the most unbending monotheists were weeded out from the mass of the community, and it was they who accompanied Zerubbabel or Ezra on his sacred mission. Misfortune, which had not shaken their faith, had deepened and purified it. Not only were they Jehovists, but they were Jehovists of the sternest type. There was among them none of that admixture of levity, and none of that facile adaptability to foreign rites, which characterised the older Jews.

From this time forward their monotheism has never been broken by a single relapse.

Thus the Captivity forms the turning-point in the character of the Jews; for, in fact, the nation which was conquered by Nebuchadnezzar was not the nation which, in the days of Kyros and Artaxerxes, returned to recolonise and rebuild Jerusalem. The conquered people belonged to a monarchy which, if it was now feeble and sunken, was directly descended from one which had been glorious and mighty, and which had aimed at preserving for Judæa the status and dignity of an independent power. Under its influence the Jews had been mobile, idolatrous, deaf to the voice of Jehovistic prophets, neglectful of Jehovistic rites; desirous of conquest, and, when that was impossible, unwilling on political grounds to submit to foreign domination; rude if not semi-barbarous in morals, and distracted by the contention of rival religious parties. But this polity, of which the ruling motives were mainly political, was succeeded after the return of the exiles by a polity of which the ruling motives were exclusively religious. All were now adherents of Jehovah; all were zealous performers of the rites conceived to be his due.

This change must be borne in mind if we would understand Jewish history; for the same language is not applicable to the Jews before and after the Captivity, nor can we regard in the same light a struggling and feeble race upholding its unanimous faith in the midst of trials, and an independent nation in which a party, from time to time victorious, endeavours to impose that faith by force. We may without inconsistency censure the violence of the

Jehovistic sectaries, and admire the courage of the Jehovistic people. But although there is much in this change that is good, it must be admitted that it has its bad side. While becoming more conscientious, more scrupulously true to its own principles, and more penetrated with a sense of religion, Judaism became at the same time more rigid, more formal, more ritualistic, and more unsocial. Ewald has remarked that the constitution established after the return from captivity is one that lays undue stress upon the exterior forms of religion, and may in time even become hostile to what is truly holy. As it claims to be in possession of something holy which temporal governments do not possess, it cannot submit to their dominion; hence, he observes, Israel could never become an independent nation again under this constitution.[1] Nor was this all. Even apart from its tendency to magnify external forms, which was perhaps not of its essence, the religion of Jehovah had inherent vices. The Jews, believing their god to be the only true one, and insisting above all on the supreme importance of preserving the purity of his *cultus*, were necessarily led to assume a haughty and exclusive attitude towards all other nations, which could not fail to provoke their hostility. This unloveable spirit was shown immediately after their return by their contumelious rejection of the Samaritan proposals to aid in building the temple—proposals which seem to have been made in good faith; by the Sabbatarian legislation of Nehemiah; and even more by the excessively harsh measures taken by Ezra for

[1] Ewald, Geschichte des Volkes Israel, vol. iv.—Die Heiligherrschaft, 3. Die bestimmtere Gestaltung der Zeit der neuen Wendung.

the purification of the race. It was simply inevitable that all heathen nations who came in contact with them should hate a people who acted on such principles. Nor were the fears of the heathen altogether without foundation. When the Jews recovered a temporary independence under the Maccabees, their intolerance, now able to vent itself in acts of conquest, became a source of serious danger. Thus, John Hyrcanus destroyed the temple of the Samaritans (who also worshipped Jehovah) on Mount Gerizim, and the Jews actually commemorated the event by a semi-festival. Alexander Jannasus, too, carried on wars of conquest against his neighbours. In one of these he took the town of Gaza, and evinced the treatment to be expected from him by letting loose his army on the inhabitants and utterly destroying their city. It was no doubt their unsocial and proud behaviour towards all who were not Jews that provoked the heathens to try their temper by so many insults directed to the sensitive point—their religion. Culpable as this was, it must be admitted that it was in some degree the excessive scrupulosity of the Jews in regard to things indifferent in themselves that exposed them to so much annoyance. Had they been content to permit the existence of Hellenic or Roman customs side by side with theirs, they might have been spared the miseries which they subsequently endured. But the Scriptures, from beginning to end, breathed a spirit of fierce and exclusive attachment to Jehovah; he was the only deity; all other objects of adoration were an abomination in his sight. Penetrated with this spirit, the Jews patiently submitted to the yoke of every succeeding authority—Chaldeans, Syrians,

Egyptians, Romans—until the stranger presumed to tamper with the national religion. Then their resistance was fierce and obstinate. The great rebellion which broke out in the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes, under the leadership of Mattathias, was provoked by the attempt of that monarch to force Greek institutions on the Jewish people. The glorious dynasty of the Asmoneans were priests as well as kings, and the royal office, indeed, was only assumed by them in the generation after that in which they had borne the priestly office, and as a consequence of the authority derived therefrom. Under the semi-foreign family of the Herods, who supplanted the Asmoneans, and ruled under Roman patronage, as afterwards under the direct government of Rome, it was still nothing but actual or suspected aggressions against the national faith that provoked the loudest murmurs or the most determined opposition. It was this faith which had upheld the Jews in their heroic revolt against Syrian innovations. It was this which inspired them to support every offshoot of the Asmonean family against the odious Herod. It was this which led them to entreat of Pompey that he would abstain from the violation of the temple; to implore Caligula, at the peril of their lives, not to force his statue upon them; to raise tumults under Cumanus, and finally to burst the bonds of their allegiance to Rome under Gessius Florus. It was this which sustained the war that followed upon that outbreak—a war in which even the unconquerable power of the Roman Empire quailed before the unrivalled skill and courage of this indomitable race; a war of which I do not hesitate to say that it is probably the

most wonderful, the most heroic, and the most daring which an oppressed people has ever waged against its tyrants.

But against such discipline as that of Rome, and such generals as Vespasian and Titus, success, however brilliant, could be but momentary. The Jewish insurrection was quelled in blood, and the Jewish nationality was extinguished—never to revive. One more desperate effort was indeed made; once more the best legions and the best commanders of the Empire were put in requisition; once more the hopes of the people were inflamed, this time by the supposed appearance of the Messiah, only to be doomed again to a still more cruel disappointment. Jerusalem was razed to the ground; Aelia Capitolina took its place; and on the soil of Aelia Capitolina no Jew might presume to trespass. But if the trials imposed on the faith of this devoted race by the Romans were hard, they were still insignificant compared to those which it had to bear from the Christian nations who inherited from them the dominion of Europe. These nations considered the misfortunes of the Jews as proceeding from the divine vengeance on the crime they had committed against Christ; and lest this vengeance should fail to take effect, they made themselves its willing instruments. No injustice and no persecution could be too bad for those whom God himself so evidently hated. Besides, the Jews had a miserable habit of acquiring wealth; and it was convenient to those who did not share their ability or their industry to plunder them from time to time. But the Jewish race and the Jewish religion survived it all. Tormented, tortured, robbed, put to death,

hunted from clime to clime; outcasts in every land, strangers in every refuge, the tenacity of their character was proof against every trial, and superior to every temptation. In this unequal combat of the strong against the weak, the synagogue has fairly beaten the Church, and has vindicated for itself that liberty which during centuries of suffering its enemy refused to grant. Eighteen hundred years have passed since the soldiers of Titus burned down the temple, laid Jerusalem in ashes, and scattered to the winds the remaining inhabitants of Judæa; but the religion of the Jews is unshaken still; it stands unconquered and unconquerable, whether by the bloodthirsty fury of the legions of Rome, or by the still more bloodthirsty intolerance of the ministers of Christ.

SUBDIVISION I.—*The Historical Books.*

It is scarcely necessary to say that no complete account of the contents of the Old Testament can be attempted here. To accomplish anything like a full description of its various parts, and to discuss the numerous critical questions that must arise in connection with such a description, would in itself require a large volume. In a treatise on comparative religion, anything of this kind would be out of place. It is mainly in its comparative aspect that we are concerned with the Bible. Hence many very interesting topics, such, for instance, as the age or authorship of the several books, must be passed over in silence. Tempting as it may be to turn aside to such inquiries, they have no immediate bearing on the subject in hand. Whatever may be the ultimate verdict of

Biblical Criticism respecting them, the conclusions here reached will remain unaffected. All that I can do is to assume without discussion the results obtained by the most eminent scholars, in so far as they appear to me likely to be permanent. That the Book of Genesis, for example, is not the work of a single writer, but that at least two hands may be distinguished in it; that the Song of Solomon is, as explained both by Renan and Ewald, a drama, and not an effusion of piety; that the latter part of Isaiah is not written by the same prophet who composed the former,—are conclusions of criticism which I venture to think may now be taken for granted and made the basis of further reasoning. At the same time I have taken for granted—not as certain, but as likely to be an approximation to the truth—the chronological arrangement of the prophets proposed by Ewald in his great work on that portion of Scripture. Further than this, I believe there are no assumptions of a critical character in the ensuing pages.

First, then, it is to be observed that the problems which occupied the writers of the Book of Genesis, and which in their own fashion they attempted to solve, were the same as those which in all ages have engaged the attention of thoughtful men, and which have been dealt with in many other theologies besides that of the Hebrews. The Hebrew solution may or may not be superior in simplicity or grandeur to the solutions of Parsees, Hindus, and others; but the attempt is the same in character, even if the execution be more successful. The authors of Genesis endeavour especially to account for:—

1. THE CREATION OF THE UNIVERSE.
2. THE ORIGIN OF MAN AND ANIMALS.
3. THE INTRODUCTION OF EVIL.
4. THE DIVERSITY OF LANGUAGES.

Although the fourth of these questions is, so far as I am aware, not a common subject of consideration in popular mythologies, the first three are the standard subjects of primitive theological speculation. Let us begin with the Creation.

One of the earliest inquiries that human beings address themselves to when they arrive at the stage of reflection is:—How did this world in which we find ourselves come into being? Out of what elements was it formed? Who made it, and in what way? A natural and obvious reply to such an inquiry is, that a Being of somewhat similar nature to their own, though larger and more powerful, took the materials of which the world is formed and moulded them, as a workman moulds the materials of his handicraft, into their present shape. The mental process gone through in reaching this conclusion is simply that of pursuing a familiar analogy in such a manner as to bring the unknown within the range of conceptions applicable to the known. The solution, as will be seen shortly, contrives to satisfy one-half of the problem only by leaving the other half out of consideration. This difficulty, however, does not seem to have occurred to the ancient Hebrew writers who propounded the following history of the Creation of the universe:—

"In the beginning," they say, "God created the heavens and the earth. And the earth was desolate and waste, and darkness on the face of the abyss, and

the Spirit of God hovering on the face of the waters. And God said: Let there be light, and there was light. And God saw the light that it was good, and God divided between the light and the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And it was Evening, and it was Morning: one day.

"And God said: Let there be a vault for separation of the waters; and let it divide between waters and waters." Hereupon he made the vault, and separated the waters above it from those below it. The vault he called Heavens. This was his second day's work. On the third, he separated the dry land from the sea, "and saw that it was good;" besides which he caused the earth to bring forth herbs and fruit-trees. "And God said: Let there be lights in the vault of the heavens to divide between the day and between the night, and let them be for signs and for times and for days and for years." Hereupon he made the sun for the day, the moon for the night, and the stars. "And God put them on the vault of the heavens to give light to the earth, and to rule by day and by night, and to separate between the light and the darkness; and God saw that it was good. And it was evening, and it was morning: the fourth day."[1]

Let us pause a moment here before passing on to the next branch of the subject: the creation of animals and man. The author had two questions before him; how the materials of the universe came into being, and how, when in being, they assumed their present forms and relative positions. Of the first he says nothing, unless the first verse be taken to

[1] Gen. i. 1–19.

refer to it. But this can scarcely be; for the expression, "God made the heavens and the earth," cannot easily be supposed to refer to the original production of the matter out of which the heavens and the earth were subsequently made.[1] Rather must we take it as a short heading, referring to the creation which is about to be described. And in any case, the manner in which there came to be anything at all out of which heavens and earth could be constructed is not considered. We are left apparently to suppose that matter is coeval with the Deity; for the author never faces the question of its origin, which is the real difficulty in all such cosmogonies as his, but hastens at once to the easier task of describing the separation and classification of materials already in existence.

Somewhat similar to the Hebrew legend, both in what it records and in what it omits, is the story of creation as told by the Quichés in America:—

"This is the first word and the first speech. There were neither men nor brutes, neither birds, fish, nor crabs, stick nor stone, valley nor mountain, stubble nor forest, nothing but the sky; the face of the land was hidden. There was naught but the silent sea and the sky. There was nothing joined, nor any sound, nor thing that stirred; neither any to do evil, nor to rumble in the heavens, nor a walker on foot; only the silent waters, only the pacified ocean, only it in its calm. Nothing was but stillness, and rest, and darkness, and the night; nothing but the Maker and Moulder, the Hurler, the Bird-Serpent."[2]

Another cosmogony is derived from the Mixtecs, also aborigines of America:—

"In the year and in the day of clouds, before ever were either years or days, the world lay in darkness; all things were order-

[1] On the meaning of בָּרָא (to create), see Chips, vol. i. pp. 134, 135.

[2] M. N. W., p. 196.—Popol Vuh, p. 7.

less, and a water covered the slime and the ooze that the earth then was." [1]

Two winds are in this myth the agents employed to effect the subsidence of the waters, and the appearance of dry land. In another account, related by some other tribes, the muskrat is the instrument which divides the land from the waters. These myths, as Mr Brinton, who has collected them, truly remarks, are "not of a construction, but a reconstruction only, and are in that respect altogether similar to the creative myth of the first chapter of Genesis."

In the Buddhistic history of the East Mongols, the creation of the world is made, as in Genesis, the starting-point of the relation. But the creative forces in this mythology are apparently supposed to be inherent in primeval matter. Hence we have a Lucretian account of the movements of the several parts of the component mass without any consideration of the question how the impulse to these movements was originally given. "In the beginning there arose the external reservoir from three different masses of matter; namely, from the creative air, from the waving water, and from the firm, plastic earth." A strong wind from ten quarters now brought about the blue atmosphere. A large cloud, pouring down continuous rain, formed the sea. Dry land arose by means of grains of dust collecting on the surface of the ocean, like cream on milk.[2]

[1] M. N. W., p. 196.

[2] Geschichte der Ost-Mongolen und ihres Fürstenhauses verfasst von Ssanang Ssetsen Chungtaidschi. Aus dem Mongolischen übersetzt von J. J. Schmidt, St Petersburg, 1829. 4to, p. 3.

This work will, in the following pages, always be referred to under "G. O. M."

Although the sacred writings of the Parsees contain no connected account of the creation, yet this void is fully supplied by traditions which have acquired a religious sanction, and have entered into the popular belief. These traditions are found in the Bundehesh and the Shahnahmeh, works of high authority in the Parsee system. According to them, Ahura-Mazda, the good principle, induced his rival, Aĝra-Mainyus, the evil principle, to enter into a truce of 9000 years, foreseeing that by means of this interval he would be able to subdue him in the end. Aĝra-Mainyus, having discovered his blunder, went to the darkest hell, and remained there 3000 years. Ahura-Mazda took advantage of this repose to create the material world. He produced the sky in 45 days, the water in 60, the earth in 75, the trees in 30, the cattle in 80, and human beings in 75;—365 days were thus occupied with the business of creation. It will be observed that, though the time taken is longer, the order of production is the same in the Parsee as in the Hebrew legend. This fact tends to confirm the supposition, which will hereafter appear still more probable, of an intimate relation between the two.

Always prone to speculation, the Hindus were certain to find in the dark subject of creation abundant materials for their mystic theories. Various explanations are accordingly given in the Rig-Veda. Thus, the following account is found in the tenth Book :—

"Let us, in chanted hymns, with praise, declare the births of the gods,—any of us who in this latter age may behold them. Brahmanaspati blew forth these births like a blacksmith. In the earliest age of the gods, the existent sprang from the

non-existent: thereafter the regions sprang from Uttānapad. The earth sprang from Uttānapad, from the earth sprang the regions: Daksha sprang from Aditi, and Aditi from Daksha. Then the gods were born, and drew forth the sun, which was hidden in the ocean."[1]

With higher wisdom, another Vaidik Rishi declares it impossible to know the origin of the universe:—

"There was then neither non-entity nor entity: there was no atmosphere, nor sky above. What enveloped [all]? Where, in the receptacle of what, [was it contained]? Was it water, the profound abyss? Death was not then, nor immortality; there was no distinction of day or night. That One breathed calmly, self-supported; there was nothing different from, or above, it. In the beginning darkness existed, enveloped in darkness. All this was undistinguishable water. That One which lay void, and wrapped in nothingness, was developed by the power of fervour. Desire first arose in It, which was the primal germ of mind; [and which] sages, searching with their intellect, have discovered in their heart to be the bond which connects entity with non-entity. The ray [or cord] which stretched across these [worlds], was it below or was it above? There were there impregnating powers and mighty forces, a self-supporting principle beneath, and energy aloft. Who knows, who here can declare, whence has sprung, whence, this creation? The gods are subsequent to the development of this [universe]; who then knows whence it arose? From what this creation arose, and whether [any one] made it or not, he who in the highest heaven is its ruler, he verily knows, or even he does not know."[2]

A later narrative ascribes creation to the god Prajâpati, who, it is said, having the desire to multiply himself, underwent the requisite austerities, and then produced earth, air, and heaven.[3]

We now return to Genesis, which proceeds to its second problem: the creation of living creatures and

[1] O. S. T., vol. v. p. 48.—Rig-Veda, x. 72.
[2] O. S. T., vol. v. p. 356.—Rig-Veda, x. 129.
[3] A. B., vol. ii. p. 372.

of man. This is solved in two distinct fashions by two different writers. The first relates that on the fifth day God said, "Let the waters swarm with the swarming of animals having life, and let birds fly to and fro on the earth, on the face of the vault of the heavens." Having thus produced the inhabitants of ocean and air on the fifth day, he produced those of earth on the sixth. On this day too he made man in his own image, and created them male and female. The whole of his work was now finished, and on the seventh day he enjoyed repose from his creative exertions, for which reason he blessed the seventh day.[1]

Here the first account of creation ends; the second begins with a descriptive title at the fourth verse of the second chapter. The writer of this version, unlike his predecessor, instead of ascribing the creation of man to the immediate fiat of Elohim, describes the process as resembling one of manufacture. God formed the human figure out of the dust of the earth, and then blew life into it, a conception drawn from the widespread notion of the identity of breath with life. Again, the narrator of the second story varies from the narrator of the first about the creation of the sexes. In the first, the male and female are made together. In the second, a deep sleep falls upon the man, during which God takes out a rib from his side and makes the woman out of it. Generally speaking, it may be remarked that the former writer moves in a more transcendental sphere than the latter. He likes to conceive the origin of the world, with all its flora and all its fauna, as arising from the simple power of the word of God. How they arise he never

[1] Gen. i. 1–ii. 3.

troubles himself to say. The latter is more terrestrial. God with him is like a powerful artist; extremely skilled indeed in dealing with his materials, but nevertheless obliged to adapt his proceedings to their nature and capabilities. This author delights in the concrete and particular; and not only does he aim at relating the order of the creation, but also at making the *modus operandi* more or less intelligible to his hearers.

A somewhat different account of the origin of man is given in the traditions of Samoa, one of the Fiji islands. These traditions also describe an epoch when the earth was covered with water. "Tangaloa, the great Polynesian Jupiter," sent his daughter to find a dry place. After a long time she found a rock. In subsequent visits she reported that the dry land was extending. "He then sent her down with some earth and a creeping plant, as all was barren rock. She continued to visit the earth and return to the skies. Next visit, the plant was spreading. Next time, it was withered and decomposing. Next visit, it swarmed with worms. And the next time, the worms had become men and women! A strange account of man's origin!" On which it may be remarked, as a curious psychological phenomenon, tending to illustrate the effects of habit, that the missionary considers it "a strange account of man's origin" which represents God as making him from worms, but readily accepts another in which he is made out of dust.

The third question dealt with in Genesis is that of the origin of evil. This is a problem which has engaged the attention and perplexed the minds of many

inquirers besides these ancient Hebrews, and for which most religions provide some kind of solution. The manner in which it is treated here is as follows:—

When God made Adam, he placed him in a garden full of delights, and especially distinguished by the excellence of its fruit-trees. There was one of these trees, however, the fruit of which he did not wish Adam to eat. He accordingly gave him strict orders on the subject in these words: "Of every tree of the garden thou mayst eat; but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, of that thou mayst not eat, for on what day thou eatest thereof, thou diest the death."[1] This order we must suppose to have been imparted by Adam to Eve, who was not produced until after it had been given. At any rate, we find her fully cognisant of it in the ensuing chapter, where the serpent appears upon the scene and endeavours, only too successfully, to induce her to eat the fruit. After yielding to the temptation herself, she induced her husband to do the like; whereupon both recognised the hitherto unnoticed fact of their nudity, and made themselves aprons of fig-leaves. Shortly after this crisis in their lives God came down to enjoy the cool of the evening in the garden; and Adam and Eve, feeling their guilt, ran to hide themselves among the trees. God called Adam, and the latter replied that he had hidden himself because he was naked. But God at once asked who had told him he was naked. Had he eaten of the forbidden tree? Of course Adam and Eve had to confess, and God then cursed the serpent for his gross misconduct, and punished the man by imposing labour upon him, and the woman by rendering

[1] Gen. ii. 16, 17.

her liable to the pains of childbirth. He also condescended so far as to become the first tailor, making garments of skins for Adam and Eve. But though he had thus far got the better of them by his superior strength, he was not without apprehension that they might outwit him still. "And God, the Everlasting,[1] spoke: See, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil; and now, lest he should stretch out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat and live for ever! Therefore God, the Everlasting, sent him out of the garden of Eden, to cultivate the ground from which he had been taken."[2] And in order to make quite sure that the man should not get hold of the tree of life, a calamity which would have defeated his intention to make him mortal, he guarded the approach to it by means of Cherubim, posted as sentinels with the flame of a sword that turned about. In this way he conceived that he had secured himself against any invasion of his privilege of immortality on the part of the human race.

Like the myth of creation, the myth of a happier and brighter age, when men did not suffer from any of the evils that oppress them now, is common, if not universal. Common too, if not equally common, is the notion that they fell from that superior state by contracting the stain of sin. I need scarcely refer to the classical story of a golden age, embodied by Hesiod in his "Works and Days," nor to the fable of Pandora allowing the ills enclosed in the box to escape into the world. But it may be of interest to remark, that the conception of a Paradise was no less

[1] I have followed Zunz's rendering of יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים.

[2] Gen. iii. 22, 23.

familiar to the natives of America than to those of Europe. "When Christopher Columbus," observes Brinton, "fired by the hope of discovering this terrestrial paradise, broke the enchantment of the cloudy sea and found a new world, it was but to light upon the same race of men, deluding themselves with the same hope of earthly joys, the same fiction of a long-lost garden of their youth."[1] Elsewhere he says: "Once again, in the legends of the Mixtecas, we hear the old story repeated of the garden where the first two brothers dwelt. . . . 'Many trees were there, such as yield flowers and roses, very luscious fruits, divers herbs, and aromatic spices.'"[2] Corresponding to the golden age among the Greeks was the Parsee conception of the reign of Yima, a mythological monarch who was in immediate and friendly intercourse with Ahura-Mazda. Yima's kingdom is thus described in the Vendidad: "There was there neither quarrelling nor disputing; neither stupidity nor violence; neither begging nor imposture; neither poverty nor illness. No unduly large teeth; no form that passes the measure of the body; none of the other marks, which are marks of Aŋra-Mainyus, that he has made on men."[3] In another passage, found in the Khorda-Avesta, not only is the happiness of Yima's time depicted, but it is also distinctly asserted that he fell through sin. "During his rule there was no cold, no heat, no old age, no death, no envy created by the Devas, on account of the absence of lying, previously, before he (himself) began to love lying, untrue speeches. Then, when he began to love

[1] M. N. W., p. 87. [2] M. N. W., p. 90.
[3] Av., vol. i. p. 76.—Vendidad, Fargard ii. 116 ff.

lying, untrue speeches, Majesty fled from him visibly with the body of a bird."[1]

More elaborately than in any of these systems is the fall of man described in the mythology of Buddhism. In this religion, as in that of the Jews, man is of divine origin, though after a somewhat different fashion. A spiritual being, or god, fell from one of the upper spheres, to be born in the world of man. Through the progressive increase of this being arose "the six species of living creatures in the three worlds." The most eminent of these species, Man, enjoyed an untold duration of life (another point in which Buddhistic legends resemble those of the Hebrews). Locomotion was carried on through the air; they did not consume impure terrestrial food, but lived on celestial victuals; and propagation, since there was no distinction of sex, was carried on by means of emanation. They did not require sun or moon, for they saw by their own light. Alas! one of these pure beings was tempted by a food called earth-butter and ate it. The rest followed its example. Hereupon the heavenly food vanished; the race lost their power of going about the sky, and ceased to shine by their own light. This was the origin of the evil of the darkening of the mind. As a consequence of these deeds, sun, moon, and stars appeared. Still greater calamities were in store for men. Another, at another time, ate a different kind of food, an example again followed by the rest. In consequence of this, the distinctions of sex were established in them; passion arose; they began to beget children. This was the origin of the evil of sensual love. On a further

[1] Av., vol. iii. p. 175.—Khorda-Avesta, xxxv. 32, 34.

occasion, one of them ate wild rice, and all lived for a time on wild rice, gathered as it was needed for immediate consumption. But when some foolish fellow took it into his head to collect enough for the following day, the rice ceased to grow without cultivation. This was the origin of the evil of idle carelessness. It being now necessary to cultivate rice, persons began to appropriate and quarrel about land, and even to kill one another. This was the origin of the evil of anger. Again, some who were better off hid their stores from those who were not so well off. This was the origin of the evil of covetousness. In course of time the age of men began to decline so as to be expressible in numbers. It continues gradually to decline until a turning-point arrives, at which it again increases.[1]

Several points of similarity between the Hebrew myth and that just narrated will doubtless occur to the reader. The fall of man is due, in this, as in Genesis, to the eating of a peculiar food by a single person; and this example is followed, in the one case, by the only other inhabitant; in the other, by all. The calamity thus entailed does not terminate in the loss of former pleasures, but extends to the introduction of crime and sexual relations. Eve is cursed by having to bear children; the same misfortune happened to the Buddhist women. Cain quarrelled with Abel and killed him; so did the landed proprietors in the Indian legend quarrel with and kill one another.

The fourth question which appeared to have engaged the attention of the authors of Genesis

[1] G. O. M., p. 5-9.

was that of the variety of languages. How was it, if all mankind were descended from a single pair, and if again all but the Noachian family had been drowned, that they did not all speak the pure language in which Adam and Eve had conversed with their Creator in Paradise? Embarrassed by their own theories, the writers attempted to account for the phenomenon of the diverse modes of speech in use among men by an awkward myth. Men had determined to build a town, with a tower which should reach to heaven. Jehovah, however, came down one day to see what they were about, and was filled with apprehension that, if they succeeded in this undertaking, he might find it impossible to prevent them from carrying out their wishes in other ways also, whatever those wishes might be. So he determined to confound their language, that they might not understand one another, and by this happy contrivance put an end to the construction of the dangerous tower.[1]

We have anticipated the course of the narrative in order to consider the solutions offered in Genesis of the four principal problems with which it attempts to deal. We must now return to the point at which we left the parents of the race, namely, immediately after their expulsion from Eden. They now began to beget children rapidly; and Adam's eldest son, Cain, afterwards killed his second son, Abel, for which Jehovah cursed him as he had previously cursed his parents. Adam and Eve had several other children, and (though this is nowhere expressly stated, but only implied) the brothers and sisters united in marriage to carry on the propagation of the species. In

[1] Gen. xi. 1-9.

course of time, however, the "sons of God" began to admire the beauty of the "daughters of men," and to take wives from among them. Jehovah, indignant at such a scandal, fixed the limits of man's life—which had hitherto been measured by centuries—at 120 years. At the same time there were giants on earth. Now Jehovah saw that the human race was extremely wicked, so much so, that he began to wish he had never created it. To remedy this blunder, however, he determined to destroy it; and in order that the improvement should be thorough, to destroy along with it all cattle, creeping things, and birds, who had not (so far as we are aware) entered into the same kind of irregular alliances with other species as men. Nevertheless, he had still a lingering fondness for his handiwork, badly as it had turned out; and therefore determined to preserve enough of each kind of animal, man included, to carry on the breed without the necessity of resorting a second time to creation. Acting upon this resolve, he ordered an individual named Noah to build an ark of gopher-wood, announcing that he would shortly destroy *all flesh*, but wished to save Noah and his three sons, with their several wives. He also desired him to take two members of each species of beasts and birds, or, according to another account, seven of each clean beast and bird, and two of each unclean beast; but in any case taking care that each sex should be represented in the ark. When Noah had done all this, the waters came up from below and down from above, and there was an increasing flood for forty days. All terrestrial life but that which floated in the ark was destroyed. At last the waters began to ebb, and

finally the ark rested on the 17th day of the 7th month on Mount Ararat. After forty more days Noah sent out a raven and a dove, of which only the dove returned. In seven days he sent the dove again, and it returned, bringing an olive-leaf; and after another week, when he again sent it out, it returned no more. It was not, however, till the 27th of the 2d month of the ensuing year (these chroniclers being very exact about dates) that the earth was dried, and that Noah and his party were able to quit the ark. To commemorate the goodness of God in drowning all the world except himself and his family, Noah erected an altar and offered burnt-offerings of every clean beast and every clean fowl. The effect was instantaneous. So pleased was Jehovah with the "pleasant smell," that he resolved never to destroy all living beings again, though still of opinion that "the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth." [1]

The myth of the deluge is very general. The Hebrews have no exclusive property in it. Many different races relate it in different ways. We may easily suppose that the partial deluges to which they must often have been witnesses suggested the notion of a universal deluge, in which not only a few tribes or villages perished, but all the inhabited earth was laid under water; or the memory of some actual flood of unusual dimensions may have survived in the popular mind, and been handed down with traits of exaggeration and distortion such as are commonly found in the narratives of events preserved by oral tradition. Let us examine a few instances of the flood-myth.

[1] Gen. vi. 7, 8.

The Fijians relate that the god "Degei was roused every morning by the cooing of a monstrous bird," but that two young men, his grandsons, one day accidentally killed and buried it. Degei having, after some trouble, found the dead body, determined to be avenged. The youths "took refuge with a powerful tribe of carpenters," who built a fence to keep out the god. Unable to take the fence by storm, Degei brought on heavy floods, which rose so high that his grandsons and their friends had to escape in "large bowls that happened to be at hand." They landed at various places; but it is said that two tribes became extinct.[1]

The Greenlanders have "a tolerably distinct tradition" of a flood. They say that all men were drowned excepting one. This one beat with his stick upon the ground and thereby produced a woman.[2]

Kamtschatka has a somewhat similar legend, except that it admits a larger number of survivors. Very many, according to this version, were drowned, and the waves had sunk those who had got into boats; but others took refuge in rafts, binding the trees together to make them. On these they saved themselves with their provisions and all their property. When the waters subsided, the rafts remained on the high mountains.[3]

Among the North Americans "the notion of a universal deluge" was, in the time of the Jesuit De Charlevoix, "rather widespread." In one of their stories, told by the Iroquois, all human beings were drowned; and it was necessary, in order to repopulate the earth, to change animals into men.[4]

[1] Viti, p. 394.
[2] Grönland, p. 246.
[3] Kamtschatka, p. 273.
[4] N. F., vol. iii. p. 345.

The Tupis of Brazil are supposed to be named after Tupa, the first of men, "who alone survived the flood."[1] Again, "the Peruvians imagined that *two* destructions had taken place, the first by a famine, the second by a flood; according to some a few only escaping, but, after the more widely accepted opinion, accompanied by the absolute extirpation of the race." The present race came from eggs dropped out of heaven.[2] Several other tribes relate in diverse forms this world-wide story. In one of the versions, found in an old Mexican work, a man and his wife are saved, by the directions of their god, in a hollow cypress. In another, the earth is destroyed by water, because men "did not think nor speak of the Creator who had created them, and who had caused their birth." "Because they had not thought of their Mother and Father, the Heart of Heaven, whose name is Hurakan, therefore the face of the earth grew dark, and a pouring rain commenced, raining by day, raining by night."[3]

The diluvian legend appears in a very singular form in India in the Śatapatha Brâhmana. There it is stated, that in the basin which was brought to Manu to wash his hands in, there was one morning a small fish. This fish said to him, "Preserve me, I shall save thee." Manu inquired from what it would save him. The fish replied that it would be from a flood which would destroy all creatures. It informed Manu that fishes, while small, were exposed to the risk of being eaten by other fishes; he was therefore to put it first into a jar; then when it grew too large for that, to dig a trench

[1] M. N. W., p. 185. [2] Ibid., p. 213. [3] Ibid., p. 206 ff.

and keep it in that; then when it grew too large for the trench, to carry it to the ocean. Straightway it became a large fish, and said: "Now in such and such a year, then the flood will come; thou shalt therefore construct a ship, and resort to me; thou shalt embark in the ship when the flood rises, and I shall deliver thee from it." Manu took the fish to the sea, and in the year that had been named, "he constructed a ship and resorted to him. When the flood rose, Manu embarked in the ship. The fish swam towards him. He fastened the cable of the ship to the fish's horn. By this means he passed over this northern mountain. The fish said, 'I have delivered thee; fasten the ship to a tree. But lest the water should cut thee off whilst thou art on the mountain, as much as the water subsides, so much shalt thou descend after it.' He accordingly descended after it as much (as it subsided). . . . Now the flood had swept away all these creatures; so Manu alone was left here."[1] The story goes on to relate that Manu, being quite alone, produced a woman by "arduous religious rites," and that with this woman, who called herself his daughter, "he begot this offspring, which is this offspring of Manu," that is, the existing human race.

After the flood, the history proceeds for some time to narrate the lives of a series of patriarchs, the mythological ancestors of the Hebrew race. Of these the first is Abram, afterwards called Abraham; to whom a solemn promise was made that he was to be the progenitor of a great nation; that Jehovah would bless those who blessed him, and curse those

[1] O. S. T., vol. i. p. 183.

who cursed him; and that in him all generations of the earth should be blessed.[1] When Abraham visited Egypt, he desired his wife Sarah to call herself his sister, fearing lest the Egyptians should kill him for her sake. She did so, and was taken into Pharaoh's harem in consequence of her false statement; but Jehovah plagued Pharaoh and his house so severely that the truth was discovered, and Sarah was restored to her lawful husband. It is remarkable that Abraham is stated to have subsequently repeated the same contemptible trick, this time alleging by way of excuse that Sarah really was his step-sister; and that Abraham's son, Isaac, is said to have done the same thing in reference to Rebekah.[2] Abimelech, king of Gerar, who was twice imposed upon by these patriarchs, must have thought it a singular custom of the family thus to pass off their wives as sisters. Apparently, too, both of them were quite prepared to surrender their consorts to the harems of foreign monarchs rather than run the smallest risk in their defence.

Abraham, at ninety-nine years of age, was fortunate in all things but in one: he had no legitimate heir. But this too was to be given him. Jehovah appeared to him, announced himself as Almighty God, and established with Abraham a solemn covenant. He promised to make him fruitful, to give his posterity the land of Canaan, in which he then was, and to cause Sarah to have a son. At the same time he desired that all males should be circumcised, an operation which was forthwith performed on Abraham, his illegitimate son Ishmael, and all the

[1] Gen. xii. 1-3. [2] Gen. xii. 10-20, xx., xxvi. 6-11.

men in his house.[1] In due time Sarah had a son whom Abraham named Isaac. But when Isaac was a lad, and all Abraham's hopes of posterity were centred in him as the only child of Sarah, God one day commanded him to sacrifice him as a burnt-offering on a mountain in Moriah. Without a murmur, without a word of inquiry, Abraham prepared to obey this extraordinary injunction, and was only withheld from plunging the sacrificial knife into the bosom of his son by the positive interposition of an angel. Looking about, he perceived a ram caught in a thicket, and offered him as a burnt-offering instead of Isaac. For this servile and unintelligent submission, he was rewarded by Jehovah with further promises as to the amazing numbers of his posterity in future times.[2]

The tradition of human sacrifice, thus preserved in the story of Abraham and Isaac, is found also in a curious narrative of the Aitareya Brahmana. That sacred book also commemorates an important personage, in this instance a king, who had no son. Although he had a hundred wives, yet none of them bore him a male heir. He inquired of his priest, Narada, what were the advantages of having a son, and learned that they were very great. "The father pays a debt in his son, and gains immortality," such was one of the privileges to be obtained by means of a son. The Rishi Narada therefore advised King Harischandra to pray to Varuna for a son, promising at the same time to sacrifice him as soon as he was born. The king did so. "Then a son, Rohita by name, was born to him. Varuna said to him, 'A son

[1] Gen. xvii. [2] Gen. xxi. 1–8; xxii. 1–19.

is born to thee, sacrifice him to me.' Harischandra said, 'An animal is fit for being sacrificed, when it is more than ten days old. Let him reach this age, then I will sacrifice him to thee.' At ten days Varuna again demanded him, but now his father had a fresh excuse, and so postponed the sacrifice from age to age until Rohita had received his full armour." Varuna having again claimed him, Harischandra now said, "Well, my dear, to him who gave thee unto me, I will sacrifice thee now." But Rohita, come to man's estate, had no mind to be sacrificed, and ran away to the wilderness. Varuna now caused Harischandra to suffer from dropsy. Rohita, hearing of it, left the forest, and went to a village, where Indra, in disguise, met him and desired him to wander. The advice was repeated every year until Rohita had wandered six years in the forest. This last year he met a poor Rishi, named Ajigarta, who was starving, to whom he offered one hundred cows for one of his three sons as a ransom for himself in the sacrifice to be offered to Varuna. The father having objected to the eldest, and the mother to the youngest, the middle one Sunahsepa, was agreed upon as the ransom, and the hundred cows were paid for him. Rohita presented to his father the boy Sunahsepa, who was accepted by the god with the remark that a Brahman was worth more than a Kshattriya. "Varuna then explained to the king the rites of the Rajasuya sacrifice, at which on the day appointed for the inauguration he replaced the (sacrificial animal) by a man."

But at the sacrifice a strange incident occurred. No one could be found willing to bind the victim to

the sacrificial post. At last his father offered to do it for another hundred cows. Bound to the stake, no one could be found to kill him. This act also his father undertook to do for a third hundred. "He then whetted his knife and went to kill his son. Sunahsepa then got aware that they were going to butcher him just as if he were no man (but a beast). 'Well,' said he, 'I will seek shelter with the gods.' He applied to Prajapati, who referred him to another god, who did the same; and thus he was driven from god to god through the pantheon, until he came to Ushas, the dawn. However, as he was praising Ushas, his fetters fell off, and Harischandra's belly became smaller; until at the last verse he was free, and Harischandra well." Sunahsepa was now received among the priests as one of themselves, and he sat down by Visvamitra, an eminent Rishi. Ajigarta, his father, requested that he might be returned to him, but Visvamitra refused, "for," he said, "the gods have presented him to me." From that time forward he became Visvamitra's son. At this point, however, Ajigarta himself entreated his son to return to his home, and the answer of the latter is remarkable. "Sunahsepa answered, 'What is not found even in the hands of a Shudra, one has seen in thy hand, the knife (to kill thy son); three hundred cows thou hast preferred to me, O Angiras.' Ajigarta then answered, 'O my dear son! I repent of the bad deed I have committed; I blot out this stain! one hundred of the cows shall be thine!' Sunahsepa answered, 'Who once might commit such a sin, may commit the same another time. Thou art still not free from the brutality of a Shudra, for thou hast com-

mitted a crime for which no reconciliation exists.' 'Yes, irreconcilable (is this act),' interrupted Visvamitra!" [1]

On the likeness of this story to the Hebrew legend of the intended sacrifice of Isaac, and on the difference between the two, I shall comment elsewhere. From the days of Abraham the history proceeds through a series of patriarchal biographies—those of Isaac and Rebekah, of Jacob and Rachel, of Joseph and his brothers—to the captivity of the Israelites in Egypt under the successor of the monarch whose prime minister Joseph had been. It is at this point that the history of the Hebrews as a distinct nation may be said to begin. The patriarchs belong to universal history. But from the days of the Egyptian captivity it is the fortunes of a peculiar tribe, and afterwards of an independent people that are followed. We have their deliverance from slavery, their progress through the wilderness, their triumphant establishment in their destined home, the rise, decline, and fall of their national greatness, depicted with much graphic power, and intermingled with episodes of the deepest interest. It would not be consistent with the plan or limits of this work to follow the history through its varied details; all we can do is to touch upon it here and there, where the adventures, institutions, or imaginations of the Hebrews present points of contact with those of other nations as recorded in their authorised writings.

It was only by the especial favour of Jehovah that the Hebrew slaves were enabled to escape from Egypt at all. That deity appointed a man named Moses as

[1] A. B., p. 460–469.

their leader; and, employing him as his mouthpiece, desired Pharaoh to let them go. On Pharaoh's refusal, he visited Egypt with a series of calamities; all of them inadequate to the object in view, until at length Pharaoh and all his army were overwhelmed in the Red Sea, which had opened to allow the Israelites to pass. These last now escaped into the wilderness, where, under the guidance of Moses, they wandered for forty years, undergoing all sorts of hardships, before they reached the promised land. During the course of their travels, Jehovah gave Moses ten commandments, which stand out from a mass of other injunctions and enactments, by the solemnity with which they were delivered, and by the extreme importance of their subject-matter. They are reported to have been given to Moses by Jehovah in person on Mount Sinai, in the midst of a very considerable amount of noise and smoke, apparently intended to be impressive. By these laws the Israelites were ordered—

1. To have no other God but Jehovah.
2. To make no image for purposes of worship.
3. Not to take Jehovah's name in vain.
4. Not to work on the Sabbath day.
5. To honour their parents.
6. Not to kill.
7. Not to commit adultery.
8. Not to steal.
9. Not to bear false witness against a neighbour.
10. Not to covet.

Concerning these commandments, it may be observed that the acts enjoined or forbidden are of very different characters. Some of the obligations thus imposed are universally binding, and the

precepts relating to them form a portion of universal ethics. Others again are of a purely special theological character, and have no application at all except to those who hold certain theological doctrines. Lastly, others command states of mind only, which have no proper place in positive laws enforced under penalties. To illustrate these remarks in detail: the four commandments against killing, stealing, adultery, and calumny are of universal obligation, and though they are far from exhausting the list of actions which a moral code should prohibit, yet properly belong to it and are among its most important constituents. But the first, second, third, and fourth commandments presuppose a nation believing in Jehovah as their God; and even with that proviso the fourth, requiring the observance of a day of rest, is purely arbitrary; belonging only to ritual, not to morals. To place it along with prohibitions of murder and theft, is simply to confuse in the minds of hearers the all-important distinction between special observances and universal duties. Again, the fifth and tenth commandments require mere emotional conditions; respect for parents in the one case, absence of covetousness in the other. No doubt both these mental conditions have actions and abstinences from action as their correlatives; but it is with these last that law should deal, and not with the mere states of feeling over which no commandment can exercise the smallest control. Law may forbid us to annoy our neighbour, or do him an injury on account of his wife whom we love, or his estate which we desire to possess; but it is idle to forbid us to wish that the wife or the estate were ours.

These errors are avoided in the five fundamental commandments of Buddhism, which relate wholly to matters that, if binding upon any, are binding upon all. They are these :—

1. Not to kill.
2. Not to steal.
3. Not to indulge in illicit pleasures of sex.
4. Not to lie.
5. Not to drink intoxicating liquors.[1]

No doubt the fifth is not of equal importance with the rest; yet its intention is simply to put a stop to drunkenness, and this it accomplishes, like teetotal societies, by requiring entire abstinence. Probably in hot climates, and with populations not capable of much self-control, this was the wisest way. The third commandment, as I have presented it, is somewhat vague, but this is because the form in which it is given by the authorities is not always the same. Sometimes it appears as a mere prohibition of all unchastity; but the more probable view appears to be that of Burnouf, who interprets it as directed against adultery, in substantial accordance with Alabaster, who renders it as an injunction "not to indulge the passions, so as to invade the legal or natural rights of other men."

In the eight principal commandments of the Parsees, the breach of which was to be punished with death, there is the same confusion of theological and natural duties as in the Hebrew Bible. The Parsees were forbidden—

1. To kill a pure man (*i.e.*, a Parsee).
2. To put out the fire Behram.

[1] R. B., vol. i. p. 334.—Lotus, p. 447.—Wheel, p. xliii.

3. To throw the impurity from dead bodies into fire or water.
4. To commit adultery.
5. To practise magic or contribute to its being practised.
6. To throw the impurity of menstruating women into fire or water.
7. To commit sodomy with boys.
8. To commit highway-robbery or suicide.[1]

Besides these commandments, Jehovah gave his people a vast mass of laws, amounting in fact to a complete criminal code, through his mouthpiece Moses. Among these laws were those which were written on the two tables of stone, commonly though erroneously supposed to have been the ten commandments of the 20th chapter. The express statement of Exodus forbids such a supposition. It is there stated that when God had finished communing with Moses he gave him "two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God." This most valuable autograph Moses had the folly to break in his anger at finding that the Israelites, led by his brother Aaron, had taken to worshipping a golden calf in his absence.[2] God, however, desired him to prepare other tables like those he had destroyed, and kindly undertook to write upon them the very words that had been on the first. Apparently, however, he only dictated them to Moses, who is said to have written upon the tables "the words of the covenant, the ten commandments." What these words were there can be no doubt, for he had begun his address to Moses by saying, "Behold, I make a covenant;" and had concluded it by the expression, "Write thou *these* words: for after the tenor of these words have

[1] Av., vol. ii. p. lx.

[2] Ex. xxxi. 18, and xxxii. 19.

I made a covenant with thee and with Israel."[1] Now the commandments thus asserted to have been written on the tables of stone were very different from the ten given before on Mount Sinai, and resemble more closely still the style of those quoted from the Parsee books. Yet they were evidently deemed by the writers of great importance, from the honour ascribed to them of having been originally written in God's own handwriting on stone. Their purport is:—1. To forbid any covenant with the inhabitants of the land to which the Israelites were going, and to enjoin them to "destroy their altars, break their images, and cut down their groves;"—2. To require the observance of the feast of unleavened bread;—3. To lay claim to firstlings for Jehovah, and demand their redemption;—4. To command the Sabbatical rest;—5. To enjoin the observance of the feast of weeks; 6. To desire that all males should appear thrice yearly before the Lord;—7. To forbid the sacrifice of blood with leaven;—8. To forbid leaving the sacrifice of the feast of the passover till morning;—9. To demand the first-fruits for Jehovah;—10. To forbid seething a kid in its mother's milk.[2]

Eminent as Moses was, and high as he stood in the favour of his God, he was not permitted to lead his people to Canaan. Jehovah punished him for a momentary weakness by depriving him of that privilege, which was reserved for Joshua. Just as the waters of the Red Sea were cleft in two to allow the Israelites to quit Egypt, so were those of the

[1] Ex. xxxiv. 1–28.

[2] My attention was drawn to the fact that these were the contents of the tables by Goethe's interesting essay: "Zwei wichtige, bisher unerörterte, biblische Fragen."

Jordan cleft in two to allow them to enter Canaan. No sooner did the feet of the priests bearing the ark touch the water, than the portion of the river below was cut off from that above, the upper waters rising into a heap.[1] Striking as this miracle is, it is not more so than that performed by Visvamitra, an Indian sage. When he arrived at a river which he desired to cross, that holy man said: "Listen, O sisters, to the bard who has come to you from afar with waggon and chariot. Sink down; become fordable; reach not up to our chariot-axles with your streams. (The rivers answer): We shall listen to thy words, O bard; thou hast come from far with waggon and chariot. I will bow down to thee like a woman with full breast (suckling her child), as a maid to a man will I throw myself open to thee. (Visvamitra says): When the Bharatas, that war-loving tribe, sent forward, impelled by Indra, have crossed thee, then thy headlong current shall hold on its course. I seek the favour of you the adorable. The war-loving Bharatas have crossed; the Sage has obtained the favour of the rivers. Swell on, impetuous and fertilising; fill your channels; roll rapidly."[2]

So that the very same prodigy which, according to the Book of Joshua, was wrought for the benefit of the Hebrew people in Palestine, was, according to the Rig-Veda, wrought for the benefit of a warlike tribe in India.

After their arrival and settlement in Palestine the Israelites passed through a period of great trouble and disturbance. The government was a direct theocracy; men appointed by God, that is, self-

[1] Josh. iii. [2] O. S. T., vol. i. p. 340.

appointed, put themselves at the head of affairs and governed with more or less success under the inspiration, and in the name of Jehovah. During this time the people were exposed to great annoyance from their enemies the Philistines, by whom they were for a certain space held in subjugation. The legend of the national hero and deliverer, Samson, falls within this period of depression under a foreign yoke. Samson is the Jewish Herakles, and his exploits are altogether as fabulous as those of his Hellenic counterpart; though it is not impossible that such a personage as Samson may have lived and may have led the people with some glory against their hereditary enemies. Many internal disturbances contributed to render the condition of the Israelites under their theocracy far from enviable; and at length, under the government of Samuel, the last representative of this state of things, the people could bear their distresses no longer and united to demand a king. The request was undoubtedly a wise one; for the authority of a monarch was eminently needed to give internal peace and protection against external attacks to the distracted nation. Samuel, however, was naturally opposed to such a change. His feelings and his interests were alike concerned in the maintenance of the direct government of Jehovah, whose plenipotentiary he was. But all his representations that the proposal to elect a king was a crime in the eyes of God, were unavailing. He was compelled to yield, and selected, as the monarch appointed by Jehovah himself, a young man named Saul. Before long, however, Jehovah discovered that he had made a mistake, and that Saul was not the kind of man

he had hoped to find him. Samuel was therefore desired to anoint David, to supplant him. In other words, Saul did not prove the obedient instrument which Samuel had hoped to make of him, and he therefore entered into a secret conspiracy to procure his deposition. The conduct of Saul, and his relations to David, have probably been misrepresented by the ecclesiastical historians, who persistently favour David. Nevertheless, they cannot wholly disguise the lawless and savage career of this monarch before his accession to the throne, of which at length he obtained possession. Nor was his conduct during his occupation of it altogether exemplary. He, however, promoted the views of the priestly party, and this was enough to cover a multitude of sins.

His son Solomon who succeeded him was the most magnificent of the monarchs of Israel, and the last who ruled over the undivided kingdom. He was especially renowned for his wisdom, which is exemplified by a famous decision. Two women came before him to dispute the ownership of an infant. One of them stated that the other, who was alone in the same house with her, had killed her own child by lying upon it during the night, and taken the living child from its mother while that mother was asleep. The other asserted that the living child was hers. Having heard the two statements, the king ordered the living child to be cut in two and half given to each woman. Hereupon the one declared that she would prefer to resign it altogether; but the other professed her acquiescence in the judgment. The king at once awarded it to her who had been willing

to resign it rather than see it divided.[1] Equal, or perhaps even greater wisdom, was displayed by a monarch whose history is recorded in one of the sacred books of Buddhism. Two women were contending before him about their right to a boy. He desired each of them to take hold of it by one of its hands and to pull at it; the one who succeeded in getting it to keep it. She who was not the mother pulled unmercifully; whereas the true mother, though stronger than her rival, only pulled gently in order to avoid hurting it. The king perceived the truth, and adjudged it to the one who had pulled it gently.[2]

Rehoboam, the son and successor of Solomon, failing to conciliate the people at his accession, brought about the schism between Samaria and Judæa, between the ten tribes and the two, which was never afterwards healed. After this the government in each kingdom may be described as absolute monarchy tempered by prophetical admonition. The prophets, who formed a kind of professional body of advisers in the interest of Jehovah, made it their business to reprove the crimes, and especially the idolatries of the kings. They exercised the kind of influence which a *corps diplomatique* may sometimes exercise on a feeble court. The monarchs sometimes attended to their advice; sometimes rejected it; and they receive commendation or reproof at the hands of the historians according to their conduct in this respect. Two of these prophets, Elijah and Elisha, were men of great eminence, and their actions are recorded at length. Such was the power of Elisha

[1] 1 Kings iii. 16–28. [2] G. O. M., p. 344.

that when, on one occasion, he cursed some children who had called him bald head, she-bears came out of the wood and ate forty-two of them.[1] Respect for ecclesiastics or prophets is sometimes inculcated by such decided measures as these. A young Buddhist monk once laughed at another for the alacrity with which he leapt over a grave, saying he was as active as a monkey. The man whom he had ridiculed told him that he belonged to the highest rank in the Church; that is, that he was an Arhat. Upon hearing this the young monk was so alarmed that all his hair stood on end, and he begged for forgiveness. His repentance saved him from being born in hell; but because he had laughed at an Arhat he was condemned to be born 500 times as a monkey.[2]

Elisha's powers in other respects were not less wonderful. He could cause iron to swim, could foretell the course of events in a war, could restore the dead to life, and could smite the king's enemies with blindness.[3] In this last accomplishment he has rivals, as Canon Callaway has correctly noted, among the Amazulu priests. The Amazulus have a word in their language to describe the practice. "It is called an *umlingo*," they say, if, when a chief is about to fight with another chief, his doctors cause a darkness to spread among his enemies, so that they are unable to see clearly.[4]

The kingdom of Israel, unfaithful to the worship of Jehovah, fell under the yoke of Shalmaneser King of Assyria; while Judah, though attacked and summoned to submit, by his successor, Sennacherib

[1] 2 Kings ii. 23-25.
[2] G. O. M., p. 351.
[3] 2 Kings vi. 7.
[4] R. S. A., vol. iii. p. 338.

(or more correctly Sanherib), remained independent some time longer. The King of Judah was at this time Hezekiah, a man thoroughly imbued with the principles of the Jehovistic party, and therefore much lauded by the historians. The prophet of the day was Isaiah, one of the most eminent of those who have filled the prophetic office. Isaiah warmly encouraged Hezekiah to resist the designs of conquest cherished by Sanherib, and promised a successful issue. The messengers of the Assyrian monarch had insultingly reproached Jehovah with his inability to deliver the land, alleging that none of the gods of the territories which he had conquered had availed them anything. But a signal confutation of this profane belief in large armies as against deities was about to be given, and that in a manner which gave an equally signal triumph to Jehovah, the god of the Jews, and Ptah, the god of the Egyptians. Sanherib was engaged in an expedition against Egypt, which was governed at this time by a priest-king, resembling Hezekiah in the piety of his character. This priest was in bad odour with his army, who refused to assist him against the invaders. During his trouble on this account, the god whom he served appeared to him in his sleep and promised that he should suffer nothing, for he would send him his divine assistance, just as Jehovah promised deliverance through the mouth of Isaiah. He therefore went with some followers to Pelusium, and when there, a number of field-mice, pouring in upon the Assyrians, devoured their quivers, their bows, and the handles of their shields, so that on the next day they fled defenceless, and many were killed. Herodotus tells us

that in his day there was still to be seen the statue of the king in the temple of Ptah, a mouse in his hand, and this inscription: "Whoever looks on me, let him revere the gods."[1] In the Hebrew version of this catastrophe, the field-mice are converted into the angel of the Lord, and the destruction of the weapons into the slaughter by that angel of 185,000 men. Sanherib, it is added, returned to Nineveh, where he was assassinated by his two sons.[2] But Sanherib himself, in a deciphered inscription, declares that he had beaten the Egyptians, subjected Judæa, carried off many of its inhabitants, and only left Jerusalem to the king.[3] Certainly this statement is strongly confirmed, so far as Judæa is concerned, by the admission of the historians themselves, that Sanherib had taken the fenced cities of the country; that Hezekiah had made an unreserved submission to him, and had even sent him, by way of tribute, not only all the treasures in his own palace and in the temple, but the very gold from the doors of the temple, and from the pillars which he himself had overlaid.[4] So humiliating a position went far to justify the taunts of the Assyrian ambassadors, that the god of Judæa was no more to be trusted as a defence against material weapons than the gods of the subjugated nations.

A remarkable instance of the favour of Heaven towards Hezekiah was subsequently evinced. The king fell dangerously ill, and was warned by Isaiah to make the necessary arrangements in view of his death, which was about to happen. Hezekiah did

[1] Herod., ii. 141.
[2] 2 Kings xix. 35-37.
[3] R. I., p. 328.
[4] 2 Kings xviii. 13-16.

not bear the announcement with much dignity. He passionately implored Jehovah to remember his piety and his good deeds, and then "wept sore." Moved by this pitiable supplication, Jehovah sent Isaiah back again to promise him fifteen years' more life. On Hezekiah's asking for a sign that he would be healed, Isaiah asked him whether he would prefer that the shadow on the dial should advance or go back ten degrees. Hezekiah, thinking that it was a mere trifle for a god to cause it to advance, desired that it might turn backwards.[1]

A similar grace was shown towards King Woo in China, but in this case it was the prayer of others, not his own, that effected his recovery. His brother, the Duke of Chow, erected four altars, put certain symbols upon them, and addressed himself to three departed kings. "The *grand* historian *by his order wrote* on tablets his prayer to the following effect:—'A.B., your chief descendant, is suffering from a severe and dangerous sickness;—if you three kings have in heaven the charge of *watching over* him, *Heaven's* great son, let me, Tan, be a substitute for his person. I have been lovingly obedient to my father; I am possessed of many abilities and arts which fit me to serve spiritual beings. Your chief descendant, on the other hand, has not so many abilities and arts as I, and is not so capable of serving spiritual beings. And, moreover, he was appointed in the hall of God to extend his aid to the four quarters *of the empire*, so that he might establish your descendants in this lower world. The people of the four quarters stand in reverent awe of him. Oh! do not let that pre-

[1] 2 Kings xx. 1–11.

cious heaven-conferred appointment fall to the ground, and all our former kings will also have a perpetual reliance and resort. I will now seek for your orders from the great tortoise."[1] After this prayer, the Duke divined with the tortoises, which gave favourable indications. "The oracular responses" were favourable too. Accordingly the king recovered, but the devoted brother, though he did not die, suffered for some time from unjust suspicions, and retired from court. This was after the decease of King Woo. The discovery of the tablets by Woo's successor led to his restoration to favour. The relation of the reign of Hezekiah, one of the most inglorious of Judah's rulers, is an example of the use made of a theory which pervades and colours the whole history of the kings from beginning to end. That theory is, that God favoured and protected those monarchs who worshipped him and obeyed his prophets, while he punished those who worshipped other gods and neglected his orders. The deposition of Saul, the glory of David, the destruction of the families of Jeroboam and Baasha, the miserable fate of Ahab and his seventy sons, the exaltation of Jehu and his milder punishment proportioned to his mitigated idolatry, are all examples of the prevalence of this theory. Some of the facts indeed were rather difficult to deal with; such, for instance, as the palpable decline of Judæa under Hezekiah, and the continuance of its previous misfortunes under Josiah, the most praiseworthy of the kings, who, in spite of his unrivalled piety, was slain in a battle against a mere pagan. But inconsistencies like these might

[1] C. C., vol. iii. p. 353.—Shoo King, part 5, book 6.

be glossed over or explained away. The best kings might meet with the greatest calamities, and the people of Jehovah might prove even more unfortunate than the heathen. It mattered not. They were still under his protection; and if they suffered, it was because they had not worshipped him enough, or not worshipped him exclusively. With this elastic hypothesis the key to all historical events was found.

Traces of a similar theory are to be found in the sacred books of China, though in one instance it is placed in the mouth of a successful sovereign desirous of vindicating his supersession of a former dynasty. It is, however, precisely in such cases, where some David or Jehu has deposed a former monarch and taken his throne, that this theory is useful, transferring, as it does, the responsibility of the issue to a higher power. Thus speaks the Chinese king:—"I have heard the saying—'God leads men to tranquil security,' but the sovereign of Hea would not move to such security, whereupon God sent down *corrections*, indicating his mind to him. Kĕĕ, however, would not be warned by God, but proceeded to greater dissoluteness and sloth and excuses for himself. Then Heaven no longer regarded nor heard him, but disallowed his great appointment, and inflicted extreme punishment. Hereupon it charged your founder, T'ang the Successful, to set Hea aside, and by means of able men to rule the empire. From T'ang the Successful down to the Emperor Yih, every sovereign sought to make his virtue illustrious, and duly attended to the sacrifices. And thus it was that while Heaven exerted a great establishing influence, preserving and regulating the house of Yin,

its sovereigns on their part were humbly careful not to lose the favour of God, and strove to manifest a good-doing corresponding to that of Heaven. But in these times, their successor showed himself greatly ignorant of *the ways of* Heaven, and much less could it be expected of him that he would be regardful of the earnest labours of his fathers for the country. Greatly abandoned to dissolute idleness, he paid no regard to the bright principles of Heaven, nor the awfulness of the people. On this account God no longer protected him, but sent down the great ruin which we have witnessed. Heaven was not with him because he did not seek to illustrate his virtue. *Indeed,* with regard to all states, great and small, throughout the four quarters of the empire, in every case there are reasons to be alleged for their punishment. . . . The sovereigns of our Chow, from their great goodness, were charged with the work of God. There was the charge to them, Cut off Yin. *They proceeded to perform it,* and announced the correcting work of God. . . . The thing was from the decree of Heaven; do not resist me; I dare not have any further change for you.'"[1]

But it was not only by interested parties that this doctrine was proclaimed in China. The She King, a sacred book corresponding in character to the Psalms, distinctly adopts it, and thus gives it the highest sanction. This is the language of one of the Odes :—

"Great is God,
Beholding this lower world in majesty.
He surveyed the four quarters [of the kingdom],

[1] C. C., vol. iii p. 460.—Shoo King, part 5, b. 14, ii. 1–18.

Seeking for some one to give settlement to the people.
Those two [earlier] dynasties
Had failed to satisfy him with their government;
So throughout the various States
He sought and considered
For one on which he might confer the rule.
Hating all the great [States],
He turned his kind regards on the west,
And there gave a settlement [to king T'æ]. . . .
God having brought about the removal thither of this Intelligent ruler,
The Kwan hordes fled away; . . .
God, who had raised the State, raised up a proper ruler for it. . . .
This King Ke
Was gifted by God with the power of judgment,
So that the fame of his virtue silently grew.
His virtue was highly intelligent,
Highly intelligent and of rare discrimination;
Able to lead; able to rule,—
To rule over this great country;
Rendering a cordial submission, effecting a cordial union.
When the sway came to King Wăn,
His virtue left nothing to be dissatisfied with.
He received the blessing of God,
And it was extended to his descendants."

The Ode proceeds to relate how completely victorious this virtuous king was over his enemies, and how perfect was the security from invasion enjoyed by the country while he governed it.[1]

Feelings like those that inspired the Jewish chroniclers are still more clearly visible in the history of Thibet than in that of China. Here the orthodox compilers frequently inform us that the reign of a king who observed the law and honoured the clergy was distinguished in a peculiarly high degree by the

[1] C. C., vol. iv. p. 448.—She King, part 3, b. 1, ode 7.

prosperity of the land and the happiness of its people. Of one, for instance, who "entered the portals of religion" at thirty-eight years of age, it is noted that "he founded the constitution of the whole great nation on order, and furthered its welfare and peace."[1] His son made the whole great nation happy by promoting religion and the laws."[2] Another monarch receives a still higher panegyric. "By the unbounded honour he showed towards the clergy, he exalted religion, so that by the religious care which he bestowed on the inhabitants of the snow-kingdom, the welfare of the people of Thibet equalled that of the Tegri" (gods or spirits). A painful contrast is presented by his successor on the throne, Lang-Dharma, who belonged to the heretical "black religion," who destroyed the temples of Buddhism, persecuted its adherents, burnt its books, and degraded its ministers. So impious was he, that the very names of the three gems and of the four orders of clergy ceased to be mentioned in the land. He met, however, with his well-deserved punishment at the hands of a faithful Buddhist, who assassinated him with a bow and arrow, at the same time using words to the effect that, as Buddha overcame the unbelievers, so he had killed the wicked king.[3] Another king "showed respect to the hidden sanctuaries, whereby his power and the welfare of the land increased."[4] Comparable to Josiah in his piety and reverence for the true religion was a king whose reign is described in glowing language by his admiring historians. "This powerful ruler," they say, "who regarded the religion of Buddha as the most

[1] G. O. M., p. 201.
[2] Ibid., p. 203.
[3] Ibid., p. 49.
[4] Ibid., p. 321.

precious gem, gave great freedoms and privileges to the clergy." He honoured temples and respected the pious endowments of his ancestors. Not only did he punish thieves, robbers, and similar criminals, but if any man, of high or low position, was inimical or ill-disposed towards the faith, he was deprived of his property and reduced to the greatest distress. Some of those whose heresy was visited with this severe chastisement were so unreasonable as to grumble, and pointed out that it was only the clergy who were fattening on their misery and oppression. In saying this they pointed at the spiritual men who passed by; whereupon the faithful king issued a decree, saying, "It is strictly prohibited to look contemptuously at my clergy and to point at them with the finger;" whoever dared to do so was to have his eyes put out and his finger cut off. Unfortunately "these orders of the pious king" led to the formation of a party of malcontents, by two of whom he was strangled in his sleep. The lamentations of the historian at this untoward event are unmeasured. The power and strength of the Thibetan kingdom ran away like the stream of spring waters; the happiness and welfare of the people were extinguished like a lamp whose oil is exhausted; the royal power and majesty vanished like the colours of the rainbow; the black religion began to prevail like a destructive tempest; the inclination to good dispositions and good deeds was forgotten like a dream. Moreover, the translation of religious writings remained unfinished—for this king had also resembled Josiah in his interest in sacred books;—and those great men who adhered

to the true religion could only weep over its decline and fall.[1]

Not less pitiable was the fate of Judæa under the irreligious monarchs who followed upon Josiah. One was taken prisoner by the king of Egypt; two others were carried off to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar; under the fourth, the national independence was finally extinguished, and the people reduced to a condition of captivity in a foreign land. This calamity is distinctly ascribed to their neglect of the true religion, and their contempt for the messengers of God.[2]

Strictly speaking, the history of the Jewish nation ends with the Captivity. But there are still three books of a historical character in the Old Testament, Ezra and Nehemiah, relating the fortunes of a small number of Jews who returned to the land of their forefathers, when a change of policy in their rulers rendered this return possible; and Esther, containing the account of the reception of a Jewish woman into the harem of a heathen king, and showing how ably she contrived to use her influence in favour of the interests of her race.

SUBDIVISION 2.—*Job, Psalms, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes.*

The Book of Job, the Psalms attributed to David, and the Proverbs and Ecclesiastes attributed to Solomon, resemble one another in teaching religion and morality by the method of short sentences or maxims. They do not, like the books we have just examined, convey their moral by means of historical

[1] G. O. M., p. 361. [2] 2 Chron. xxxvi. 14–17.

narrative; nor do they, like the prophets, impress it in flowing and continuous rhetoric. Between the sober and even course of the history, and the impassioned emotional torrents poured out by the prophets, they occupy a medium position. They are more introspective, more occupied with feelings and reflections, than the first; more heedful of external nature, more able to contemplate facts, apart from their peculiar construction of those facts, than the last.

Job is the story of a wealthy landowner, concerning whom God and Satan enter into a sort of wager; God, in the first instance, challenging Satan to consider his piety and general good character, and Satan replying that, if only his prosperity were destroyed, he would curse God to his face. God then gives Satan leave to put his theory to the test by attacks directed against Job's property, desiring at the same time that his person may be spared. Job bears the loss of his wealth with resignation; but at a second colloquy Satan insinuates that his virtue would give way if his misfortunes extended to his person. Hereupon God gives Satan leave to attack him in every respect so long as he spares his life. Poor Job is accordingly covered with boils from head to foot, and his patience, proof against poverty, breaks down under this terrible infliction. He loudly curses the day of his birth, and wishes he had died from the womb. After this introduction, which, in its familiar conversations between Jehovah and the devil, resembles the grotesque legends of the middle ages, the bulk of the book is occupied with the complaints of Job, the discourses of his three friends who come to comfort him, the reproaches directed against his self-righteous-

ness by a person named Elihu, and, finally, a long address—containing as it were the moral of the tale—from the Almighty himself. At the close of the book Job expresses his abhorrence of himself and his profound repentance, and his former prosperity is then not only restored but amplified to a high degree. He has seven sons and three beautiful daughters, and dies 140 years after the events narrated, having seen four generations of his descendants. What was the effect on the mind of Satan of this result, whether he considered himself defeated, or whether he was confirmed in his malicious opinion that Job did not "fear God for nought," is nowhere stated. But one of the most curious features of this book is the picture it gives of that person, as a being not altogether bad, though fond of mischief, taking a somewhat cynical view of the motives of human conduct, and anxious, in the interests of his theory, to try experiments upon a subject selected for him by his antagonist, and therefore peculiarly likely to disappoint his expectations. It does not appear that he had any desire to hurt Job further than was necessary for his purpose, nor is there a trace of the bad character he subsequently obtained as a mere devil, longing to involve men's souls in eternal destruction.

In the Psalms we have a series of religious songs of varying character—praising, blessing, supplicating, complaining, lamenting, invoking good or evil upon others, according to the mood of the several writers, or of the same writer at different seasons. Some of them are of considerable beauty, and express much depth of religious feeling. Others, again, are inspired

by sentiments of malevolence, and merely appeal to God in support of national or private animosities. As examples of the latter class, take the 110th Psalm, supposed to have been addressed to David, where it is predicted that "the Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath," and that "he shall fill the places with the dead bodies; he shall wound the heads over many countries." In the immediately preceding Psalm, the 109th, the writer is still more vindictive, and his enemy is more exclusively his own. He begins by calling him "wicked" and "deceitful," and says he has spoken against him with a lying tongue. Premising that he is altogether in the act of prayer, he prays against the adversary in somewhat emphatic language:—

"Set thou a wicked man over him, and let the accuser stand at his right hand. When he shall be judged, let him be found guilty, and let his prayer become sin. Let his days be few, and let another take his office. Let his children be fatherless, and his wife a widow. Let his children wander about and beg, and seek food far from their desolate places. Let the creditor catch all that he hath, and strangers rob the fruit of his industry. Let there be none to extend mercy to him, and let none be merciful to his fatherless children. Let his posterity be cut off, and in the following generation let their name be blotted out. Let the iniquity of his fathers be remembered with the Lord, and let not the sin of his mother be blotted out. Let them be before the Lord continually, and let him cut off the memory of them from the earth."[1]

In the following verse the enemy is declared to have persecuted the poor and needy, and this is put forward as the excuse for imprecations evidently inspired by personal illwill. In another of these

[1] Psalm cix. 1–15.

Psalms, Jehovah is entreated to persecute the enemies of Israel with storm and tempest, as fires burn up woods and flames set mountains on fire.[1] Elsewhere the king is said to trust in the Lord, and he therefore hopes that the Lord will find out his enemies, and will make them as a fiery oven in the time of his anger; that the fire will devour them; and that he will destroy their fruit from the earth and their seed from among the children of men.[2]

Parallels to these Psalms of cursing may be met with in the Veda, just as the Psalms in general are more nearly paralleled by the Vedic hymns than by those of any other sacred book. One poet writes as follows:—

"Blinded shall ye be, O enemies, like headless snakes, and thus plagued by Agni, may Indra always kill the best of you. Whatever relation troubles us, whatever stranger wishes to kill us, him may all the gods destroy; prayer is my powerful protection, my refuge and powerful protection."[3]

Remarkably close is the similarity between the assertion of the Hindu Rishi that prayer is his powerful protection, and that of the Hebrew Psalmist that he is, or gives himself to, prayer. In another hymn the aid of a goddess Apvā (said to mean "disease or fear") is invoked against the enemies of the singer:—

"Bewildering the hearts of our enemies, O Apvā, take possession of their limbs and pass onward; come near, burn them with fires in their hearts; may our enemies fall into blind darkness.[4] . . . Attack, ye heroes, and conquer; may Indra grant you protec-

[1] Psalm lxxxiii. 14, 15.
[2] Psalm xxi. 8–10.
[3] S. V., p. 297.—Sama Veda, 2. 9. 3. 8.
[4] O. S. T., vol. v. p. 110.

tion; may our arm be productive of terror, that ye may be unconquerable. Arrow-goddess, sharpened by prayer; fly past as when shot off; reach the enemies; penetrate into them; let not even one escape thee."[1]

But these expressions of hostility, directed apparently against enemies who were engaged in actual war with the friends of the writer, make no approach in the bitterness of their curses to the language of the Psalmist when dealing with his personal foes. A parallel to this more private enmity may be found in the Atharva-Veda, where the god Kama is invoked to bring down the severest evils upon the objects of the imprecation:—

"With oblations of butter I worship Kama, the mighty slayer of enemies. Do thou, when lauded, beat down my foes by thy great might. The sleeplessness which is displeasing to my mind and eye, which harasses and does not delight me, that sleeplessness I let loose upon my enemy. Having praised Kama, may I rend him. Kama, do thou, a fierce lord, let loose sleeplessness, misfortune, childlessness, homelessness, and want upon him who designs us evil. . . . May breath, cattle, life, forsake them. . . . Indra, Agni, and Kama, mounted on the same chariot, hurl ye down my foes; when they have fallen into the nethermost darkness, do thou, Agni, burn up their dwellings. Kama, slay my enemies; cast them down into thick [literally, blind] darkness. Let them all become destitute of power and vigour, and not live a single day. . . . Let them (my enemies) float downwards like a boat severed from its moorings. . . . Do thou, Kama, drive my enemies far from this world by that [same weapon or amulet] wherewith the gods repelled the Asuras, and Indra hurled the Dasyus into the nethermost darkness."[2]

As corresponding to the many expressions to be found in the Psalms of trust in God, of pious belief in his protection, and of sensibility to his all-embrac-

[1] S. V., p. 297.—Sama Veda, 2. 9. 3 5. [2] O. S. T., vol. v. p. 404.

ing knowledge, we may quote the language of a Chinese monarch in one of the Odes of the She King. The first six lines are, it appears, held by the current interpretation in China to contain the admonition addressed by the ministers to the king, and the last six the king's reply. But we may more reasonably suppose, with Dr Legge, that the whole Ode is spoken by the king himself:—

"Let me be reverent, let me be reverent [in attending to my duties];
[The way of] Heaven is evident,
And its appointment is not easily [preserved].
Let me not say that It is high aloft above me.
It ascends and descends about our doings;
It daily inspects us wherever we are.

I am [but as] a little child,
Without intelligence to be reverently [attentive to my duties];
But by daily progress and monthly advance,
I will learn to hold fast the gleams [of knowledge], till I arrive at bright intelligence.
Assist me to bear the burden [of my position],
And show me how to display a virtuous conduct."[1]

We may fairly place this simple expression of the author's desire to do his duty, and of his reverential consciousness that Heaven is ever about us and "inspects us wherever we are," beside the words attributed to David:—

"O Jehovah, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my down-sitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou winnowest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways."[2]

[1] C. C., vol. iv. p. 598.—She King, part 4, b. 1 [iii.] 3.
[2] Psalm cxxxix. 1–3.

We need not dwell upon the Proverbs, traditionally ascribed to Solomon, but scarcely worthy of the renowned wisdom of that monarch. Some of them are indeed shrewd and well expressed; others are commonplace; and others again display more worldly wisdom than religion or virtue. Such is the recommendation of bribery: "A gift in secret pacifieth anger, and a reward in the bosom strong wrath;"[1] which, if written by a king and dispenser of justice, would be a tolerably broad hint to his loving subjects. It is noteworthy that Christ had studied this book, and that it had sunk deep into his mind.[2] The two concluding chapters are not by the same author, at least if we may believe in their superscriptions. In the last of all, a king named Lemuel repeats for the benefit of posterity the advice given him by his mother, and no doubt by many mothers to many sons both before and after him, to be careful about women and not to drink wine or spirituous liquors.

Ecclesiastes, or Koheleth, composed (according to Ewald) in the latter end of the Persian dominion, is the work of a cynic who has had much experience of the world, and has found it hollow and unsatisfactory. He is not a man of very devout mind, and can find no comfort in the ordinary commonplaces about the goodness of God, or the manner in which misfortunes are sent as punishments for sin. There is much good sense mixed with his lamentations over the vanity of life. He has seen all the works done under the sun, and all are in his opinion "vanity and vexation of spirit."

"Wisdom and knowledge do but bring more grief.

[1] Prov. xxi. 14. [2] *E.g.*, Prov. xxv. 21, 22, and xxvii. 1.

Koheleth tried various kinds of pleasure and found them vain too. He built, he planted, he made pools of water. He procured menservants and maidservants, and (as a natural consequence) had servants born in his house. All was equally fruitless. But whatever a man does, he has nothing but sorrow and grief. Even wisdom is of little use, for a dolt may inherit the fruit of the wise man's labours. Men are no better than animals; they all die equally; all return to the dust. Who can say that man's spirit goes upwards, and the animal's downwards? Just men are often rewarded like wicked men, and wicked men like just ones; this is one of the many vanities on earth. So then the best thing a man can do is to eat, drink, and enjoy life with an agreeable wife; for this life is all he has. Once dead, there is no further consciousness, or participation in anything that is going on. Whatever a man's hand finds to do, let him do it with all his might; for there is neither action nor knowledge in the grave. It is well to remember God in youth before the evil days come. Words of the wise are as goads, but bookmaking and preaching are both of them a bore." Lastly, Koheleth concludes with the pious advice to the young man whom he is addressing, to fear God and keep his commandments, for that God will judge every action, be it good or be it bad.

SUBDIVISION 3.—*The Song of Solomon.*[1]

It is a singularly fortunate circumstance that the Song of Songs, a little work of an altogether secular

[1] For information on the character and signification of this book, see "Le Cantique des Cantiques," par Ernest Renan.

nature and wholly unlike any other portion of the Hebrew Scriptures, should have been admitted into the Canon. Whatever may have been the delusion, whether its reputed Solomonian authorship or some other theory about it, under which it obtained this privilege, we owe it to this mistake that the solitary example of the Jewish drama in existence should have been preserved for the instruction of modern readers. I say modern readers, because it is not until quite recently that the dramatic character of this piece has been ascertained and established beyond reasonable doubt. Thanks to the scholarship of Germany and France, we are now able to read the Song in the light of common sense. The stern theology of Judaism is for once laid aside, and we have before us a common love-story such as might happen among any Gentile and unbelieving race. A young girl, called a Sulamite, who is attached to a young man of her own rank in life, has been carried off to the harem of Solomon against her will. She is indifferent to the splendour of the royal palace, and resists the amorous advances of the king. Thus she succeeds in "keeping her vineyard;" and is rewarded by rejoining her shepherd lover in her native village. The play is not without beauty, although it evinces a somewhat primitive condition of the drama at the time of its composition.

SUBDIVISION 4.—*The Prophets.*

We have in the prophetical books a class of writings altogether peculiar to the Hebrew Scriptures. The prophets were men who during the whole course of

the Hebrew monarchy, and even long after its close, acted as the inspired organs of the Almighty; admonishing, reproving, warning, or counselling in his name. At first the method by which the revelations they received were made known by them, was oral communication. Writing was not employed by them as an instrument of prophetic discourse until after the earliest and most flourishing stage of the monarchy was past. Perhaps they were the most powerful of the prophets who addressed their exhortations directly to those for whom they were intended in eloquent discourse or timely parable. Such prophets were Samuel, Nathan, Elijah, and Elisha, at the courts of the several kings in whose days they lived. Prophecy had declined a little in its influence on the people when its representatives betook themselves to the calmer method of written composition. Nevertheless, some of the prophets who have left us their works in writing continued at the same time to employ the older instrument of spoken addresses. Isaiah and Jeremiah are conspicuous instances of this employment of the two organs of communication downwards. During this same period there were many prophets who trusted exclusively to writing; while in the latest stage of prophetical inspiration, oral instruction was altogether dropped, and literary means alone were employed to make known the mind of Jehovah to his chosen people.

The constant theme of all the prophets whose works have come down to us is the future greatness of the Hebrew race; their complete triumph over all their enemies; the glory of their ultimate condition, and

the confusion or destruction of those who have opposed their march to this final victory. The human agent by whom this great revolution is to be effected is the Messiah. He is the destined weapon in the hand of God by whom Jewish religion, Jewish institutions, and Jewish rulers are to attain that supremacy over heathen religion, heathen institutions, and heathen rulers which is their natural birthright. Continual disappointment had no effect upon these sanguine expectations. The Messiah *must* come, Israel *must* be victorious over every other nation that came in the way: this was the word of God, and it could not fail to be fulfilled. Troubles of many kinds might beset the people in the meantime; but of the attainment of the goal at last there could be no doubt.

Of course this ever-recurring burden of the prophetic song is varied by many strains on subordinate or outlying topics. The prophets constantly refer to the events of the day, and use them for their own purposes. They reprove the sins of kings and people, endeavouring to show that these bring upon them the misfortunes from which they suffer and which postpone the day of their triumph over the Gentiles. They connect special calamities with special offences. They indicate the conduct which under existing circumstances ought to be pursued. They draw eloquent and beautiful pictures of the state of their own and of foreign countries. And they endeavour to raise the popular conceptions of the majesty of God, of his character, and his requirements, to the level they have themselves attained.

Turning now to the individual books which have come down to us in the Canon, and which must by

no means be taken as comprehending all the works of the prophets who wrote their prophecies, we find that the oldest of these is that of Joel, the son of Pethuel.[1] Joel is supposed by the highest authority to have lived in the time of King Jehoash, or Joash, who is praised for his devout obedience to Jehoiada, the priest.[2] His prophecy was occasioned by a devastation of locusts. Locusts had wasted the land for some years, and there had been drought at the same time. On the occasion of a long drought Joel feared a fresh invasion of locusts, and therefore summoned his people to a festival of repentance at the temple. This festival occurred, and rain soon followed.[3] Here the old notion of a direct connection between the attention paid by the people to Jehovah and his care for them is almost grotesquely manifested. Locusts are to be averted by fasting; rain obtained by rather more than usual devotion to God. On the other hand, the more spiritual view of religion to which the prophets generally tend, is shown in the order to the people to rend their hearts and not their garments. After thus attending to immediate necessities, Joel in stirring language exhorts the people to war, hoping that they would thus get rid of the foreign oppressors who had broken into the sunken kingdom of David. He bids them beat their ploughshares into swords, and their pruning-hooks into spears, and desires the weak to say that they are strong. He promises his people revenge over their enemies, and holds out the cheering prospect of a time when, instead of their sons and

[1] Throughout these descriptions of the prophetic books, I follow the chronological arrangement of Ewald.

[2] 2 Kings xii. [3] P. A. B., vol. i. p. 87 ff.

daughters being sold as slaves to strangers, they will themselves make slaves of the sons and daughters of the heathen.

Some short passages subsequently embodied by Isaiah in his works are considered by Ewald to belong to the same early age as Joel. The next complete prophet, however, in order of time, was Amos, whose revelations applied to the northern kingdom and threatened it with invasion by the Assyrians. Amos in fact utters a series of threatening predictions against various peoples, and his tone is mainly that of reproof. While, however, he foretells the captivity of Israel, and holds out nothing but the most depressing prospects of ruin and misery throughout the bulk of his book, he falls at the end into the accustomed strain of hopeful exultation. "The tabernacle of David" is to be raised up; Israel is to be supreme over the heathen; and the Israelites are not to be disturbed again from the land which God has given them, where exuberant prosperity is to be their lot. Incidentally, Amos tells us a little of his personal history, which is not without interest. He attributes his consecration to the prophetic office to the direct intervention of Jehovah. He had originally no connection with other prophets, but was a simple herdsman, and was employed to gather sycamore fruit. But Jehovah took him while he was following the flock, and said, "Go, prophesy unto my people Israel." His is thus a typical case of the belief in immediate inspiration, and he is an example of the kind of character which led to the existence among the Israelites of the peculiar and powerful class who were holy, but not consecrated. Amos also tells us of a

quarrel he had had with Amaziah, a priest at the court of Jeroboam. This priest had complained of his dismal predictions to the king, and had bidden him go to Judah and prophesy there. In return for this evidence of hostility Amos informs the priest that his wife is to become a prostitute in the town, that his sons and his daughters are to fall by the sword, that his land is to be divided by lot, and that he himself is to die on polluted soil.[1] Such were the courtesies that passed between rival teachers of religion at the court of Jeroboam.

Hosea also tells us something of his personal affairs, more especially of his matrimonial relations, in which he was far from fortunate. We feel, in his opening chapters, the soreness of a husband whose wife has contemned his company and sought the amusement of a troop of lovers. Gomer, in fact, was shockingly unfaithful, and Hosea uses her as a type of the infidelity of Israel to Jehovah. At length she deserted him altogether, and went to another house, but he brought her back as a slave and put her under strict conjugal discipline. In like manner is Israel to return to her God, whom she has deserted for a time, and under the influence of God's love, freely bestowed after his anger has passed away, is to enjoy a period of great prosperity. Hosea, it will be observed, belonged to the northern kingdom, and his book is pre-eminently the Ephraimitic book of prophecy. But he wrote it in Judah. He worked in the north at two distinct epochs, first towards the close of Jeroboam II.'s reign, afterwards in the time of Zachariah, Shallum, and Menahem.[2]

[1] Amos vii. 10–17. [2] P. A. B., vol. i. p. 171 ff.

An anonymous prophet, contemporary with Isaiah, stands next in order of time. He is the author of Zechariah ix.–xi. inclusive, and of Zechariah chap. xiii. ver. 7–9.[1] These chapters contain the first distinct announcement of the advent of the Messiah, who is described in the famous prediction of a King coming to Jerusalem on an ass, and on a colt, the foal of an ass. Here too we find the curious allegory of the two staves, Beauty and Bands, whereof one was broken by the prophet in token of the breach of his covenant with all the nations; the other, in token of the rupture of fraternal relations between Israel and Judah. In the course of this allegory, the prophet demands his price, thirty pieces of silver, and throws it into the temple treasure; a passage which, by an accidental obscurity in the Hebrew, has been mistranslated as referring, not to the treasure, but to "the potter in the house of Lord," and then misapplied to the betrayal of Christ and the purchase of the potter's field.

In the concluding words of this prophet it is announced that two-thirds of the people will perish, but that the remaining third will, after refining and trial, be accepted by God as his own people.

We enter now upon the consideration of a prophet who stands in the foremost rank of those distinguished leaders of opinion whose works have been included in the Canon. There is no greater name among the prophets of Israel than that of Isaiah. But in speaking of Isaiah we must not fall into the confusion of including under his writings the compositions of a prophet of far later date, which have

[1] P. A. B., vol. i. p. 247 ff.

been mistakenly bound up with his. Isaiah himself cannot receive credit for all that is published in his name. But that which he has actually left us is enough to entitle him to admiration as a master of rhetoric.

Isaiah lived in the reign of Hezekiah, and enjoyed a position of high public consideration. Some of his prophetic sayings he wrote down soon after he had uttered them; others not till long after. He had begun to come forward as a prophet in the last year of the reign of Uzziah. When he had laboured a long time in his vocation of teacher, he determined to collect his sayings in a book. His oldest work was written about the year 740 B.C., just after the accession of the young and weak Ahaz at Jerusalem, when the Assyrians had rendered the northern kingdom tributary but had not yet come to Judæa. His second was written apparently in the reign of Hezekiah, in 724; and his third in the days of the same king, when the service of Jehovah had been restored. Such at least are the conclusions of the highest living authority on the literature of the Hebrew race.[1]

The earliest stratum discernible (according to that authority) in the Book of Isaiah is from chap. ii. 2 to chap. v. inclusive, and chap. ix. 7–x. 4. The last five verses of chap. v. should not be taken along with the rest of the chapter, but should follow upon chap. x. 4.[2] These passages begin with a beautiful description of the happiness of the Israelites in the days of their coming glory, when the mountain of the Lord's house will be established on the top of the mountains, and exalted above the hills; and when all nations

[1] P. A. B., vol. i. p. 271 ff. [2] Ib., vol. i. p. 286 ff.

will flow to it, to worship and to learn the true faith. It is remarkable as evidence of the wide distinction between the view of Joel and that of Isaiah, that Isaiah exactly reverses the image of his predecessor, declaring that swords will be beaten into ploughshares and spears into pruning-hooks. Joel was looking to the necessities of the immediate present; Isaiah to the prospects of the future. These chapters also contain an amusing ironical account of the finery of the Jerusalem ladies, which might apply with slight alterations to the rich women of all ages and countries. No doubt it was very offensive to Isaiah that they should go about with necks erect and wanton eyes, walking with a mincing gait; but a prophet who should threaten the women of London or Paris with scab on the head and the exposure of their persons on account of sins like these, would certainly bring more reprobation on himself than on them. But manners in Isaiah's days were not so delicate. A time is predicted when Jehovah will wash away the filth of Zion's daughters, and when all in Jerusalem shall be called holy.

In the second part of his book (chap. vi. 1–chap. ix. 6, and chap. xvii. 1–11) Isaiah gives an interesting, though only figurative, account of his consecration to the prophetic office. In the year of King Uzziah's death he says he saw the Lord sitting on his throne with a train so long as to fill the temple. When he cried out that he was undone, for that he, a man of unclean lips, had seen the King, the Lord of hosts, a seraph flew up to him with a live coal in a pair of tongs, laid the coal on his mouth, and told him that his iniquity was now taken away and his

sin purged. After this the voice of the Lord was heard inquiring whom he should send, and Isaiah offered to take the post of his ambassador: "Here am I, send me." The proposal was accepted, and he at once received his instructions from head-quarters. The prophet began to preach in the manner desired, and among much discouraging matter he uttered the magnificent description of the Messiah, which is familiar to all:—

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace."

Isaiah's third work (composed in the reign of Hezekiah) begins at the first chapter of the canonical book. It opens with a pathetic lamentation over the infidelity of the children of Israel to their God, and proceeds at chap xiv. 28 to recount a "burden" which came in the death-year of King Ahaz. A prophecy by a much older prophet (belonging, as is supposed, to the time of Joel) is embodied in "the burden of Moab," and extends through chap. xv. and chap. xvi. 7–12, after which Isaiah, having mentioned that this was formerly the word of the Lord about Moab, proceeds to say that his present word is that within three years the glory of Moab shall be contemned. The latter part of chap. xxi. (ver. 11–17), dealing with Dumah and Arabia, also belongs to this period.

Further divisions are distinguishable in the writings of Isaiah after these three parts have been separated from the rest. Thus, we have a fourth division consisting of the 22d and 23d chapters, and containing

a personal attack on Shebna and a prediction of the fall of Tyre. A fifth division, from chap. xxviii. to xxxii. inclusive, ends with a beautiful description of the happier time that is to come, when the fruit of justice will be peace, and the result of justice quietness and security, when the people will dwell in sure habitations and untroubled abodes. There is another writing, the sixth in order, which begins at chap. x. 5, and extends, in the first instance, to the end of chap. xii. This prophecy is remarkable, even in this eloquent book, for the marvellous eloquence with which, in his visions of future glory, the inspired seer depicts the government of the "rod out of the stem of Jesse," the "Branch" that is to "grow out of his roots," in whose reign the wild beasts will no longer persecute their prey, nor Ephraim and Judah keep up the memory of their ancient feud; who will cause his beloved people to put the Philistines to flight, to conquer Edom and Moab, and reduce the children of Ammon to submission. Prophecies directed against Ethiopia and Egypt (chap. xvii. 12–xviii. 7, and chap. xx.) belong to the same portion of Isaiah's collected works. Threats against the Assyrians are contained in additional chapters, namely, chap. xxxiii. and chap. xxxvii. 22–35. Lastly, a seventh portion of Isaiah consists of chap. xix., which, after holding out the prospect of great misfortunes to Egypt, ends in a somewhat unusual strain by admitting both Egyptians and Assyrians to be equal sharers with the Israelites in the ultimate prosperity of the earth, and declaring that the Lord himself will bless them all, saying, "Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance."

It should be noted that, if Ewald's supposition be correct, the four first sections of the work, thus decomposed into its several constituents, were edited by Isaiah himself, while the fifth, sixth, and seventh were added by subsequent compilers to the collection he had left behind.[1]

A very short prophecy called by Obadiah's name follows upon the genuine writings of Isaiah in chronological order. It is in fact anonymous. In its present form it belongs to the time of the Captivity. The object of the unknown prophet was to reprove the Idumeans for rejoicing in and profiting by the destruction of Jerusalem. In his writing he embodied an older prophecy by the actual Obadiah, referring to a calamity that had befallen Edom, when a part of its territory had been surprised and completely plundered by a people with whom it had just been in alliance. The same old piece was used by Jeremiah (chap. xlix. 7) in his prophecy upon Edom.[2]

Micah, the next prophet, was a younger contemporary of Isaiah, but lived in the country. When he wrote, the northern kingdom was approaching its end, and he threatens Judah with chastisement and destruction. He foresaw the fulfilment of Messianic hopes as arising only from the ruin of the existing order of things. No more than the first five chapters are by Micah himself.[3] His book is remarkable for the extremely warlike description he gives of Messianic happiness. Many other prophets conceive it as an important element in that happiness that the Israelites shall be victorious over their enemies; but few, if any,

[1] P. A. B., vol. i. p. 488. [2] Ib., vol. i. p. 489 ff.
[3] Ib., vol. i. p. 498 ff.

have come up to Micah in the fervour with which he foretells the desolation, the carnage, the utter suppression of rival nations, which will accompany that age. The author of these scenes of blood will be the ruler who is to come from Bethlehem-Ephratah. The prophet who has added the last two chapters also looks forward to an age when Jehovah will at length perform his promises to Abraham and Jacob, to the terror of the unbelieving nations.

Next after Micah stands Nahum. The occasion of his prophecy was a hostile attack directed against Nineveh. He must have seen the danger with his own eyes, and he was therefore a descendant of one of the Israelites who had been carried off to Assyria. He evidently lived far from Palestine, and was familiar with Assyrian affairs. Elkosh, where the inscription places his residence, was a little town on the Tigris. His book may refer to the siege of Nineveh by the Median king Phraortes about 636.[1] The interest of Nahum's prophecy is merely local; he does not rise beyond the politics of the hour, and we need not therefore stop to examine his utterances in detail. It may be noted, however, that an expression which has become famous through its adoption by a much later prophet, "Behold, upon the mountains the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace," is first found in Nahum.

Zephaniah's prophecy arose out of a great movement of nations. He lived in the reign of Josiah, but wrote before the reformation effected by that monarch. The movement alluded to by him must have been the great irruption of the Scythians mentioned by

[1] P. A. B., vol. ii. p. 1.

Herodotus as having interrupted the siege of Nineveh by Kyaxares, King of the Medes.[1] These last days of the Assyrian kingdom gave rise to long disturbances in which the Chaldeans became conquerors.[2] After various threatenings against divers people, the prophecy of Zephaniah ends with a beautiful vision of the age to come, when the suppliants of Jehovah will come from beyond the rivers of Ethiopia; and when a virtuous and happy remnant will be left in Israel.

When Habakkuk, the next prophet, wrote his thoughts, and composed the public prayer or psalm which forms his concluding chapter, the Chaldeans were already in the land. This "bitter and hasty nation" was quite a new phenomenon there. Habakkuk lived after the reformation of Josiah, and therefore in the reign of Jehoiakim.[3] He seems to have written to plead with the Almighty for deliverance, and to express unabated confidence in him; and he hoped that his words, set to music and sung in public worship, would induce him to abate his anger as manifested in the Chaldean scourge.

An anonymous prophet[4] (Zechariah xii. 1–xiii. 6, and xiv.) predicts the siege and capture of Jerusalem, with all the miserable incidents of conquest: the rifling of her houses, the ravishing of her women, the condemnation to captivity of half her inhabitants. Like other prophets, however, he looks forward in sanguine anticipation to a day when the heathen nations who now make war upon Jerusalem will regularly go up there every year to worship Jehovah, and keep the feast of tabernacles. At least if any of them do not,

[1] Herod., i. 103.
[2] P. A. B., vol. ii. p. 14.
[3] Ib., vol. ii. p. 29.
[4] Ib., vol. ii. p. 52.

they will have no rain. In that glorious age the very pots in the Lord's house will be like the bowls for offerings; nay, every pot in Judah and Jerusalem will be holy to the Lord of hosts.

We pass now to the consideration of a prophet who stands second in eminence only to Isaiah, and to the unknown author of the later work which in the Canon is included in the Book of Isaiah. Jeremiah began to prophesy in the thirteenth year of Josiah, and continued to do so during the reigns of Jehoiakim and Zedekiah. His active life, like that of Isaiah, extended over a period of half a century.[1] It is noteworthy that Jeremiah was a priest, and therefore combined in his person the double qualification of consecration and of exceptional holiness: that is, he was consecrated to Jehovah, and also appointed expressly by Jehovah. The manner of his appointment to be a holy person resembles the manner of the appointment of Isaiah. The word of the Lord came to him, saying, that before God had formed him in the belly he had known him, and before he had come forth from the womb he had sanctified him, and ordained him a prophet unto the nations. Jeremiah objected that he was but a child. But Jehovah told him not to say he was a child, for that he was to go where he was sent, and speak what he was commanded. He was not to be afraid of men's faces, for he, the Lord, would deliver him. Then he touched Jeremiah's mouth with his hand, and said: "Behold, I put my words in thy mouth. See, I appoint thee this day over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to

[1] P. A. B., vol. ii. p. 63 ff.

build and to plant." After this solemn dedication to his duties Jeremiah was certainly endowed with the fullest qualifications for the prophetic office. He immediately began to see images; namely, a rod of an almond-tree and a seething pot, and it continued afterwards to be one of his characteristics to employ material imagery of this nature for the purpose of illustrating the truths he had to communicate.

After this introduction, we have a long section of the work, namely, from the second chapter to the twenty-fourth, beginning with the prophecies of the thirteenth year of Josiah. Among other things this portion includes Jeremiah's bitter imprecation upon his personal enemies, the "men of Anathoth," on whom he begs to be permitted to witness the vengeance of God, and concerning whom he receives the consoling assurance that their young men will die by the sword, and their sons and daughters by famine, and that there will not be a remnant left. This section contains also the terrible prayer against those who "devised devices" against Jeremiah, in other words, did not believe in his predictions. In its intense intolerance, in its unblushing disclosure of private malignity, in its unscrupulous enumeration of the ills desired for these opponents of the prophet, it is perhaps unrivalled in theological literature. To do Jeremiah justice it ought to be quoted at length:—

"Give heed to me, O Jehovah, and listen to the voice of my opponents. Shall evil be recompensed for good, that they dig a pit for my life? Remember how I stood before thee, to speak a good word for them, to turn away thy wrath from them. Therefore give their sons to famine, and deliver them into the power of

the sword; and let their wives be bereaved of their children and widowed, and let their men be put to death; let their young men be slain by the sword in battle. Let a cry be heard from their houses, when thou suddenly bringest troops upon them: for they have digged a pit to take me, and hid snares for my feet. Yet thou, Jehovah, knowest all their counsel against me to slay me; and blot not out their sin from thy sight, and let them be overthrown before thee; deal with them in the time of thine anger."[1]

In another chapter there is a curious account of an incident with Pashur, superintendent of the Temple, who had caused Jeremiah to be put in the stocks for a day. Jeremiah complains bitterly of the treatment he meets with on account of his prophesying, and wishes to resign the office, but the impulse proves too strong for him. He consoles himself with a pious hope that Jehovah will let him see his vengeance on his enemies.[2] He continues to predict misfortunes, but intermingles with his gloomier forebodings a fine vision of the time when God shall gather together the remnant of his flock from the countries to which he has driven them, and raise up "a righteous Branch" of the house of David, who will reign and prosper, who will execute justice and equity, in whose days Judah will be saved, and Israel dwell secure.[3]

In a third section of his work (chap. xlvi. 1–12, and chap. xlvii. 49), Jeremiah deals with foreign nations, and then (in chap. xxv.) declares that he has been prophesying a long time without being able to get the Jews to listen to him, foretells their subjugation by Nebuchadnezzar, and (rather unfortunately for his own and Jehovah's reputation for correct foresight) commits himself to the definite

[1] Jer. xviii. 19–23. [2] Jer. xx. 1–12. [3] Jer. xxiii. 2–6.

term of seventy years as the duration of the coming captivity. A wise prophet would have kept within the safe region of vagueness, where he could not come into collision with awkward dates, nor drive orthodox interpreters into such pitiable straits as those in which Ewald, for example, finds himself, when he is compelled to say that seventy years is a perfectly general indication of a future that cannot be more precisely fixed, and that it merely refers to the third generation from the writer.[1] The remainder of this section (chap. xxvi.–xxix.) relates certain encounters with other prophets whose predictions had turned out false, and one of whom, as Jeremiah exultingly relates, died during the year, exactly as Jeremiah had declared he would. Interesting evidence is supplied by these chapters of the existence of numerous prophets who differed from each other, and between whose claims only the event could decide.

In the fourth section (chap. xxx.–xxxv.) Jeremiah prophesies the restoration of Israel, and tells his readers how he bought a field from his cousin on the strength of his hopes that the captivity would have an end. A fifth part (chaps. xxxvi., xlv.) relates to Baruch, Jeremiah's secretary; and an appendix (chap. xxxvii.–xliv., and chap. xlvi. 13–28) contains historical matter, and predictions about Egypt, but concludes with the usual promise of the ultimate return of the Jewish nation to its ancestral home.

The last chapter of Jeremiah is purely historical, and, like the historical portions of Isaiah, need not

[1] P. A. B., vol. ii. p. 230.

be considered under the prophets; but it must be noted that chaps. l. and li. are not by Jeremiah, being the work of a much later writer, who lived in Palestine, and who composed them to show that the words of the genuine Jeremiah were fulfilled in the destruction of Babylon by the Medes, which was taking place at this time.[1] The small Book of Lamentations over the unhappy fate of Jerusalem, ascribed to Jeremiah, is an artistic attempt to embody the grief of the writer in a song of which each verse begins with a new letter, in alphabetical order.

We pass now to the prophet Ezekiel, a Jew who was taken into captivity with Jehoiachin, and lived at a small town of Mesopotamia. He felt the first prophetic impulses in the fifth year of the Captivity.[2] At this time the heavens were opened; he saw visions, and the word of the Lord came expressly to him. Such was the nature of his consecration. The first section of Ezekiel extends from chap. i. to xxiv., and contains utterances about Israel before the destruction of Jerusalem. The second section (chap. xxv.–xxxii.) deals with foreign nations, and the third (chap. xxxiii.–xlviii.) holds out promises of restoration.

Ezekiel is very inferior to his great predecessors, Isaiah and Jeremiah. He has neither the fervid, manly oratory of the first, nor the pathetic, though rather soft and feminine flow of the second. He takes pleasure in rather coarse images, such as that of the bread baked with human dung,[3] that of Jehovah with his two concubines, who bore him

[1] P. A. B., vol. iii. p. 140 ff. [2] Ib., vol. ii. p. 322 ff. [3] Ezek. iv.

sons and vexed him with their licentious conduct,[1] or that of the child whose navel was not cut, who grew up into a woman, over whom Jehovah spread his skirt and covered her nakedness.[2] And in general, Ezekiel is particularly prone to teaching by means of similes and illustrations. Sometimes he sees visions in which God explains his meaning; at other times he acts in a manner which is designed to be typical of coming events. Thus, on one occasion, he openly brings out his furniture for removal, as a sign to the rebellious house of Israel.[3]

As in Jeremiah, so in Ezekiel we find traces of hostility towards rival prophets, whom he denounces in no measured terms. It is interesting, too, to observe that there were female prophets in his day, who prophesied out of their own hearts. To them also he conveys the reprobation of the Almighty.[4] The form in which he looks forward to the restoration of Israel and Judah to their homes, is somewhat different from that in which it was expected by his predecessors. In a very singular vision, he relates that his God took him into a valley which was full of bones, and told him that these were the bones of the whole house of Israel. Ezekiel is then informed that God will open the graves of the dead, and cause these bones to live again, and will bring them to the land of Israel. Afterwards, he is told to join two sticks into one, this junction representing the future union of Ephraim and Judah, who are to be gathered from among the heathen, and are to form one nation governed by one king. That king is to be David, who will be their prince for ever. God will make an

[1] Ezek. xxiii. [2] Ezek. xvi. 8. [3] Ezek. xii. 1-7. [4] Ezek. xiii.

everlasting covenant of peace with them, and put his sanctuary in their midst for evermore. Here the resurrection of the dead, and the return of David, instead of the appearance of a new king, are peculiar features.

An anonymous prophet is supposed to have written Isaiah xxi. 1–10, and another Isaiah xiii. 2–xiv. 23, the latter referring to Babylon, and containing the imaginary exultation of the restored Israelites over the fallen Babylonians. After these fragments we have the work of one who is perhaps the greatest of all the prophets, but who also is unknown to us by name. As the most fitting description we may perhaps call him the anonymous prophet. The whole of the latter portion of Isaiah, from chap. xl. to the end, is his work. The anonymous prophet lived in Egypt. His peculiar conception was that Israel was the servant of the Lord for the peace and the salvation of nations, as Kyros was his servant in war.[1] Alike in beauty of language and sublimity of thought he is supreme among the writers of the Hebrew Bible. He is the prophet of sorrow; yet also the prophet of consolation. Whether by a curious accident, or whether by virtue of a tendency (not uncommon among truly great writers) to withdraw his personality from observation and confine himself wholly to the message he had to deliver, he tells us nothing of himself. Hence he has for centuries been hidden behind the figure of Isaiah, whom nevertheless he surpasses in the purity of his ideal. To him we owe the beautiful passage beginning "Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people," with the description afterwards

[1] P. A. B., vol. iii. p. 20 ff.

applied by Jesus Christ to John the Baptist. From him also we have the most exalted conceptions of the Messiah, the moral element in his character being raised, as compared with the element of material power, to a height hitherto unexampled in prophetic vision. Take, for instance, this description of his mildness combined with indomitable perseverance:—

"He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth, and the isles shall wait for his law."[1]

It is the anonymous prophet, too, who has given us the familiar passage, "He is despised and rejected of men;" a passage describing the career of a great man whose teachings involved him in persecution and ultimately in martyrdom, but nowise applicable to the Messiah. That a historical incident, known to the writer, is alluded to in this touching account of suffering goodness, admits of no reasonable doubt.

The anonymous prophet is pre-eminently the prophet of consolation. Living in the days of Kyros and of the restoration of the Temple, he had the elements of soothing speech ready to his hand; and as his predecessors had prophesied destruction and woe, occasionally varied with strains of hope, so he prophesies in strains of hope, occasionally varied with sterner language. It is his especial mission to heal the wounds that have been made in the spirit of Judah. God had indeed forsaken her for a while; but he will now take her back as a deserted wife, who had suffered her

[1] Is. xlii. 2–4.

punishment. He had hidden his face in a little wrath for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will he now have mercy upon her.[1] The concluding chapter of the anonymous prophet contains a magnificent description of the ultimate gathering of all nations and tongues, when Jerusalem will be the central point of human worship, and the glory of God will be seen by all. The picture is not indeed unmingled with darker shades, for great numbers are to be destroyed by Jehovah in his indignation. On the other hand, there is a trait exhibiting the superiority of this prophet to his predecessors in toleration for the Gentiles: namely, the remarkable prediction that some of them also are to be priests and Levites.[2] The man who could utter this sentiment had made a signal advance upon the ordinary narrow and exclusive notions of the prerogatives of the Jewish race.

It was mentioned that the fiftieth and fifty-first chapters of Jeremiah were added by a later hand. The same hand (in Ewald's opinion) composed the thirty-fourth and thirty-fifth chapters of Isaiah, of which the second describes in very eloquent terms the coming glory, when "the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."[3] Another unknown writer (Isaiah xxiv.–xxvii.) predicts in the first place the desolation which the Lord is about to effect, and then the happiness of the Jews who will be brought to their own land again, to worship Jehovah in the holy mount at Jerusalem. One of his

[1] Is. liv. 5–8. [2] Is. lxvi. 12–24. [3] Is. xxxv. 10.

expressions, "He will swallow up death in victory," has been adopted by St Paul; another, "The Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces," by the author of the Apocalypse.

The interest of Haggai's prophecy is purely special: it refers to the building of the temple at Jerusalem in the reign of Darius. It was the unexpected obstacles by which the building was hindered that kindled his zeal; he made his five speeches in three months of the same year. Probably he had not seen the first temple, and he left his prophetic work to his younger contemporary Zechariah.[1]

Zechariah also lived in the time of Darius, and dealt principally with the building of the temple.[2] A series of visions which he professes to see shows how his mind was running upon this absorbing theme; and he even expects the Messiah, whom Isaiah and Jeremiah had called a Branch of David, and whom he more emphatically terms *the* Branch, to appear at the head of affairs and to carry the works to their completion.[3] He supposes that he will then sit and rule upon his throne; a priest will be beside him, and there will be a counsel of peace between these two —the monarch and his ecclesiastical minister.[4]

It was probably more than half a century later that the short book bearing the title of Malachi was written. The true name of its author is unknown, and that of Malachi, מַלְאָכִי, my messenger, was taken by its editor from the first verse of the third chapter.[5] He is not a prophet of a high calibre, as

[1] P. A. B., vol. iii. p. 177 ff.
[2] Ib., vol. iii. p. 187 ff.
[3] Zech. iii. 8, and vi. 12.
[4] Zech. vi. 13.
[5] P. A. B., vol. iii. p. 214 ff.

is shown by his denunciation, already quoted, of those among the Jews who offered Jehovah their least valuable cattle. Nor is his conception of the Messianic epoch in any way comparable to that of the great prophets whose works he might have studied. He says indeed that the Sun of righteousness will arise with healing in his wings; but it appears that this healing is to consist in the Israelites treading down the wicked, who will be as dust under their feet. He concludes by announcing the return of Elijah, before "the great and dreadful day of the Lord," and says, in his threatening tone, that this prophet will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and of the children to the fathers, lest God should come and smite the earth with a curse.

The Book of Jonah, which may have been written in the fifth or sixth century B.C.,[1] is a story with a moral rather than a prophecy. Jonah was desired by Jehovah to preach against Nineveh, but fled from his duty, and took passage in a ship to Tarshish, duly paying his fare. However, when a terrible storm arose, Jonah knew that it was sent as a penalty for his disobedience, and told the sailors to throw him overboard. This they did, but he was swallowed alive by a large fish prepared for the purpose, and remained within it three days. By this lesson he was prepared to execute God's commands, and was accordingly thrown up by the fish on dry land. He preached to the people of Nineveh, as desired, the coming destruction of their city; but when they repented, Jehovah changed his mind, much to the annoyance of his prophet, who represented that his

[1] P. A. B., vol. iii. p. 233 ff.

unfortunate tendency to clemency was the very reason why he had not wished to enter his service. But Jehovah, by causing him to regret the destruction of a gourd which had sheltered him, showed him that there would be much more reason to spare so large a city as Nineveh, which contained, not only a vast population, but also a great deal of cattle.

If Malachi and Jonah stand in unfavourable contrast to the works composed during the golden age of Hebrew literature, Daniel, the latest book of the Old Testament, represents the complete degeneracy of prophecy. It is from beginning to end artificial; professing to be written at one time and by an author whose name and personality are given; in reality written at another time, and by an author whose name and personality are concealed. Hence it contains pseudo-prophecies, which are comparatively clear, extending from the imagined date of the supposed prophet to the actual date of the real prophet; and it contains genuine prophecies which are obscure, and which extend from the actual date into the actual future. It contains also much that relates to the politics of the day, and which, for obvious reasons, is cast into an enigmatic form. Daniel was written about the year B.C. 168, a little before the death of Antiochus Epiphanes, and the allusions to that monarch are of course made under the veil of prophecy, in a style designed to be intelligible, without being direct. The predictions of the eleventh chapter refer to the wars of the Syrian and Egyptian kings, and especially to Antiochus Epiphanes, who is the "vile person" mentioned in its twenty-first verse. The purpose of the work was to set an example of fidelity to Jehovah to the

powerful Jews who were connected with the Syrian court, and especially to the younger members of great Jewish families, who were in danger of being corrupted by its seductions.[1]

The form chosen to effect the writer's objects is autobiographical. In this way he was able to utter his political views—which, directly expressed, would have been dangerous to his safety—under the guise of sentiments uttered by Daniel, the fictitious narrator of the story. Daniel was taken as a captive child along with other children of Jewish race to serve at the court of Nebuchadnezzar, and remained at the Chaldean court until the death of Nebuchadnezzar's son, Belshazzar, and the subjugation of his empire by the Medes and Persians. He continued to hold an honourable position at the Persian court under Darius and Kyros. He first rose to distinction by relating and interpreting to Nebuchadnezzar a dream which that king had himself forgotten. Thus, from being a mere page he rose to be a sort of astrologer royal. His life was not, however, free from trouble. Among the children who had been brought with him from Judæa he had three friends, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, whom the Chaldeans called Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego. When Daniel had successfully interpreted the king's dream, he contrived to obtain lucrative situations in the province of Babylon for Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego. But these three having refused to worship a golden image which the king had set up in that province were by the king's orders cast into a burning fiery furnace, heated beyond its usual temperature. But though

[1] P. A. B., vol. iii. p. 298 ff.

they fell bound into the midst of it, they were not burnt, and were seen walking about at their ease in it, accompanied by a fourth, who looked like the Son of Man.[1]

It is remarkable that a precisely similar prodigy occurred in one of the innumerable previous existences of the Buddha Sakyamuni. He was at this time the son and heir of a great king, and to prove his devotion to the true doctrine he literally obeyed the instructions of a Brahman, who desired him to fill a ditch ten yards deep with glowing coals and jump into it. On this condition the Brahman had consented to teach him the holy doctrine. Resisting all entreaties to preserve his life, the prince caused the pool of fire to be prepared and leapt into it without shrinking for a moment. On the instant it was converted into a basin of flowers, and he appeared sitting on a lotus-flower in its midst, while the gods caused a rain of flowers, that rose knee-deep to fall upon the assembled people.[2]

Nor is this the only other example of a wise discrimination being exercised by the fiery element. During the reign of the Indian king Asoka, who in the early part of his career was ferocious and irreligious, the public executioner enjoyed the singular privilege of being entitled to retain in his house every one, whatever his position or character, who might cross the threshold of his door. Now the outside of the executioner's house was beautiful and attractive, though within it was full of instruments of torture, with which he inflicted on his victims the punishments of hell. One day a holy monk, named

[1] Dan. iii. [2] G. O. M., p. 14.

Samudra, arriving at this apparently charming house, entered it, but on discovering the nature of its interior wished to make his exit. But it was too late. The executioner had seen him, and told him that he must die. After seven days' respite, he threw the monk into an iron caldron filled with water mixed with loathsome materials, and kindled a fire below it. But the fire would not burn. Far from experiencing any pain, the holy man appeared calmly seated on a lotus. The executioner having informed Asoka of this fact, the king arrived with a suite of thousands of persons. Seeing this crowd, the monk darted into the air, and there produced miraculous appearances. The king, struck by the extraordinary sight, requested the ascetic to say who he was, declaring that he honoured him as a disciple. Samudra, perceiving that the moment had arrived at which the king was to receive the grace of instruction in the law, replied that he was a son of Buddha, that merciful Being, and that he was delivered from the bonds of existence. "And thou, O great king, thy advent was predicted by Bhagavat, when he said: A hundred years after I shall have entered into complete Nirvana, there will be in the town of Pataliputtra a king called Asoka, a king ruling over the four quarters of the world, a just king, who will distribute my relics," and so forth. He proceeded to point out to Asoka the wickedness of establishing a house of torment like that he was in, and entreated him to give security to the beings who implored his compassion. Hereupon the king accepted the law of Buddha, and determined to cover the earth with monuments for his relics. But when the royal party were about to leave the place, the execu-

tioner had the audacity to remind Asoka of his promise that no one who had once entered his doors might ever go out. "What," cried Asoka, "do you wish then to put me also to death?" "Yes," replied the man. On this he was seized and thrown into the torture-room, where he died in the flames, and his house was destroyed.[1]

Daniel himself met with an adventure of the same perilous nature as that which had befallen his three friends, though under another government. Darius, by the advice of some counsellors who desired to destroy Daniel, had made an order that no one should ask a petition of any god or man save himself for thirty days. But Daniel of course continued to worship Jehovah as before, and was sentenced in the terms of the edict to be thrown into a lions' den. But the lions would no more eat Daniel than the fire would burn his co-religionists; and just as Asoka, when he had witnessed the escape of the ascetic, worshipped Buddha, so Darius, having discovered Daniel uninjured in the lions' den, immediately ordered that in all parts of his dominions people should tremble and fear before the God of Daniel.[2]

Of the prophecies contained in this book the most remarkable is that concerning the Messiah, who is announced as destined to come at a time fixed by a mystical calculation expressed in weeks. The object of the writer was to fix a date for the Messiah's appearance, without expressing himself in such unambiguous terms as would be universally understood. Such is the true method of prophecy in all religions, for a prophet who utters his forecast of the future in

[1] H. B. I., p. 365-372. [2] Dan. vi.

such a manner as to render his meaning unmistakable, exposes himself to the hazardous possibility that the event in history may turn out altogether unlike the event foretold.

SUBDIVISION 5.—*The God of Israel.*

One great question has hitherto been left untreated —that of the theology and morals of the Hebrew Bible. Theology and morals are so intimately blended in its pages that the one can scarcely be discussed without involving the other. The character of Jehovah is the pattern of morality; his will is its fundamental law; his actions its exemplification. Hence to consider the character of Jehovah is of necessity to consider also the Hebrew notions of ethics; while to inquire into the Hebrew standard of ethics is to inquire into the commands of Jehovah. Let us try then to ascertain what manner of deity Jehovah is. To do so, our best course will be to select the salient features of his history, as related by the sacred writers.

Now, at the very outset of his proceedings we observe that he takes up towards mankind a very definite attitude: that of a superior entitled to demand implicit obedience. Whether the fact that he was man's creator justified so extensive a claim it is needless in this place to discuss. Suffice it that he had the power to enforce under the severest penalties the submission he demanded. But it might have been expected that a divine being, who assumed such unlimited rights over a race so vastly his inferiors in knowledge and in strength, should at least exercise

them with discretion and moderation. It might have been expected that where he claimed obedience it would be with a view to the wellbeing of his creatures; not merely as an arbitrary exercise of his enormous power. What, on the contrary, is the conduct he pursued? His very first act after he had created Adam and Eve and placed them in Paradise was to forbid them, under penalty of death, to eat the fruit of a certain tree which grew in their garden. There is not even a vestige of a pretence in the narrative that the fruit of this tree would in itself, and apart from the divine prohibition, have done them any harm. Quite the contrary: the fact of eating it enlarged their faculties; making them like gods, who know good and evil. And Jehovah was afraid that they might, after eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge, eat also that of the tree of life, after which he would be unable to kill them. So that it was his deliberate purpose in issuing this injunction to keep mankind feeble, ignorant, and dependent. Nor is this by any means the whole extent of his misconduct. One of two charges he cannot escape. Either he knew when he created Adam and Eve that their nature was such that they would disobey, or he did not. In the first case, he knowingly formed them liable to fall, knowingly placed them amid conditions which rendered their fall inevitable; and then punished them for the catastrophe he had all along foreseen as the necessary result of the character he had bestowed upon them. In the second case, he was ignorant and shortsighted, being unable to guess what would be the nature of his own handiwork; and should not have meddled with tasks which were obviously beyond the scope of

his faculties. And even in this latter case, the most favourable one for Jehovah, he acted with unpardonable injustice towards the man and woman in first creating them with a nature whose powers of resistance to temptation he could not tell, then placing temptation, raised to its utmost strength by a mysterious order, continually under their noses, then allowing a serpent to suggest that they should yield to it, and lastly punishing the unhappy victims of this chain of untoward circumstances by expulsion from their garden. A human parent who should thus treat his children would be severely and justly censured. It is a striking proof how rudimentary were the Hebrew conceptions of justice, that they should have accepted, in reference to their deity, a story which evinces so flagrant a disregard of its most elementary requirements.[1] Just as, in the case of Adam and Eve, he required implicit obedience to an arbitrary command, so in the case of Abraham he required implicit obedience to an immoral one. There was with him no fixed system of morality. Submission to his will was the alpha and omega of virtue. Observe now how superior is the feeling shown in the Hindu legend which has been quoted as a parallel to that of the projected sacrifice of Isaac. Although in that story the father was bound by a solemn promise to sacrifice his son, yet he is never blamed for his reluctance to do so, though Abraham is praised for his willingness; while the Brahman who is actually prepared to plunge the sacrificial knife into his child's breast is treated with scorn and reprobation for his unfeeling behaviour. Even the service of the gods is

[1] Gen. ii. 8, and iii.

not made supreme over every human emotion. But the conception of the existence of duties independent of the divine will seems not to have entered the minds of the Hebrew theologians who wrote these books.

The further proceedings of Jehovah are quite in keeping with his beginning in the garden of Eden. Throughout the whole course of the history he shows the most glaring partiality. In its earlier period he is partial to individuals; in its later, to the Hebrew race. Let us notice a few cases of this favouritism as shown towards individual favourites. Immediately after the curse upon Adam and Eve, and their banishment from Eden, we have the instructive story of Cain and Abel, so magnificently dramatised by Byron. These two brothers, sons of the original couple, both brought offerings to Jehovah; Cain, the fruit of the ground; Abel, the firstlings of his flock. But the Lord had respect to Abel and his offering, but not to Cain and his offering. Why was this difference made? Absolutely no reason is assigned for it, and it is not surprising, however lamentable, that it should have excited the jealousy of the brother who was thus ill-treated.[1] Again, it has been remarked above that Abraham and Isaac had a singular way of passing off their wives as their sisters. Pharaoh was once deceived in this way about Sarah; Abimelech of Gerar, once about Sarah, and once about Rebekah. These two monarchs were plagued by Jehovah on account of their innocent mistake; the patriarchs were not even reproved for this cowardly surrender of their consorts to adulterous embraces.[2] Jacob is another favourite, while his brother Esau is coldly

[1] Gen. iv. 1–8. [2] Gen. xii. 11–20, xx., xxvi. 7–11.

treated. Yet the inherent meanness of Jacob's character, and the comparative excellence of Esau's, are too obvious to escape even a careless reader. What can be more pitiful than the conduct of Jacob in taking advantage of a moment of weakness in his brother to purchase his birthright?[1] What more ungenerous than the odious trick by which he imposed upon his father, and cheated Esau of his blessing?[2] What again can be more magnanimous than the long subsequent reception by Esau of the brother whose miserable subserviency showed his consciousness of the wrong he had done him?[3] Yet this is the man whom Jehovah selects as the object of his peculiar blessing, and whose very deceitfulness towards a kind employer he suffers to become a means of aggrandisement.[4]

The same partisanship which in these cases forms so conspicuous a trait in the character of Jehovah distinguishes the whole course of his proceedings in reference to the delivery of the Israelites from Egypt and their settlement in Palestine. Every other nation is compelled to give way for their advantage. Pharaoh and all the Egyptians are plagued for holding them in slavery, not in the least because Jehovah was an abolitionist (for he never troubled himself about slavery anywhere else), but because it was his own peculiar people who were thus in subjugation to a race whom he did not equally affect. Throughout the long journey from Egypt to the promised land, Jehovah accompanies the Israelites as a sort of commander-in-chief, directing them what to do, and

[1] Gen. xxv. 29-34.
[2] Gen. xxvii.
[3] Gen. xxxiii. 1-15.
[4] Gen. xxx. 41-43.

giving them the victory over their enemies. As the Red Sea was divided to enable them to escape from their enemies on the one side, so the Jordan was cleft in two to enable them to conquer their enemies on the other.[1] The walls of a fortified city were thrown down to enable them to enter.[2] The sun was arrested in his course to enable them to win a battle.[3] Hornets were employed to accomplish the expulsion of hostile tribes without trouble to the Israelites.[4] Thus, as Jehovah afterwards took care to remind them, he gave them a land for which they did not labour, and cities which they did not build.[5]

Nevertheless the lot of the race who were thus highly favoured was far from happy. Their God was indeed a powerful protector, but he was also an exacting ruler. His service was at no time an easy one, and he was liable to outbursts of passion which rendered it peculiarly oppressive. Tolerant as he might be towards some descriptions of immorality, he had no mercy whatever for disloyalty towards himself. On one occasion he characterised himself by the name of "Jealous,"[6] which was but too appropriate, and implied the possession of one of the least admirable of human weaknesses. Now the Israelites were unfortunately prone to lapses of this kind. Such was the severity with which these offences were treated that it is questionable whether it would not have been a far happier fate to be drowned in the Red Sea with the Egyptians than preserved with the children of

[1] Ex. xiv. 21, 22.—Josh. iii. 7–17.
[2] Josh. vi. 20.
[3] Josh. x. 12–14.
[4] Josh. xxiv. 12.
[5] Josh. xxiv. 13.
[6] Ex. xxxiv. 14.

Israel. A few instances of what they had to undergo will illustrate this remark.

Moses had impressed upon the people the importance of having no other deity but Jehovah, and had succeeded while he was actually among them in restricting them to his worship alone. But no sooner was he absent for a season than they immediately forsook Jehovah, and took to worshipping a golden calf. Worst of all, this new divinity was set up by Aaron, the brother of Moses, and high priest of the Jehovistic faith. That Jehovah should be rather vexed at such ungrateful behaviour, after all the trouble he had taken in plaguing and slaughtering the Egyptians, was only natural; but it was surely an extraordinary want of self-control to propose to consume the whole nation at once, reserving only Moses as the progenitor of a better race. Here, as in other cases, Moses showed himself more merciful than his God. He ingeniously urged as a motive to clemency that the Egyptians would say extremely unpleasant things if the Israelites were destroyed; and after his return to the camp he contrived to appease him by inducing the Levites to perpetrate a fratricidal massacre, whereby three thousand people fell. This measure was described by Moses as a consecration of themselves to the Lord, that he might bestow his blessing upon them. It proved successful, for Jehovah now contented himself with merely plaguing the people instead of exterminating them.[1] Thus, he had scarcely finished plaguing the Egyptians before he began plaguing the Israelites in their turn. Indeed he was at this period peculiarly prone to send-

[1] Ex. xxxii.

ing plagues of one kind or another. Some complaints of the Israelites in the wilderness were visited by fire which burnt up those who were at the extremities of the camp.[1] When they began to pine for the varied food they had enjoyed in Egypt, and to lament the absence of flesh meat, he sent them quails indeed, but accompanied the gift with a very great plague, of which large numbers perished.[2] When they were dismayed by the reports brought them concerning the inhabitants of Palestine, and complained of their God for the position he had brought them into, he again fell into a rage and proposed to destroy them all by pestilence except Moses. But Moses a second time appealed to him on what seems to have been his weak side,—his regard for his reputation among the Egyptians. These had all heard of what he had been doing, and would not they and the other neighbouring nations ascribe the destruction of the Israelites in the wilderness to his inability to bring them into the promised land? Moved by this reasoning, Jehovah consented to spare the people, but determined at the same time to avenge himself upon them by not permitting any of those that had come from Egypt (except Joshua and Caleb, who had reported in the proper spirit about Palestine) to set foot within the country to which he had solemnly engaged himself to conduct them.[3] Thus, they were only saved from the Egyptians to perish in the wilderness. Truly, the tender mercies of the Lord were cruel.

But the miseries of these unfortunate wanderers were by no means ended. When, oppressed by the troubles and weariness of the way, they dared to

[1] Num. xi. 1–3. [2] Num. xi. 4–34. [3] Num. xiv. 1–39.

murmur, and inquired of Moses why he had brought them out of Egypt to die in the wilderness, where there was neither tolerable bread, nor water, the resentment of Jehovah was excited by this audacity. They ought to have been only too grateful that they had remained alive. Jehovah had not caused the earth to swallow them as it had done Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, with their wives and little children, because they had ventured to complain of the government of Moses; nor had he destroyed them by plague, as he had destroyed 14,700 people because there had been some expressions of dissatisfaction at the sudden death of those seditious men. If then they had hitherto escaped destruction, they were certainly foolish in complaining of the hardships of the desert. At any rate Jehovah soon convinced them that their grumbling was useless. No constitutional opposition was permitted in those days. Fiery serpents were despatched to bite them, and many of them died in consequence. Such was the extent of the calamity that Moses, always more merciful than his God, interceded for the people; and was directed to set up a brazen serpent, by looking at which the bites of the living serpents were healed.[1]

The extraordinary cruelty ascribed by the Hebrews to their national deity is shown in many other instances besides those that have been mentioned. And it is to be noticed that it is cruelty mingled with caprice. No one could tell beforehand precisely what actions he would visit with punishment, nor what would be the punishment with which he would visit them. Everything with him was uncertain. He had no fixed

[1] Num. xxi. 1–9.

system of laws at all, and he sometimes condemned a criminal in virtue of *ex post facto* legislation. The deluge is an example of all these vices combined. It was an excessively cruel punishment; it was inflicted capriciously, and once in a way only, because God had changed his mind as to the propriety of having created man; and it was the result of a resolution arrived at after the offences it was designed to chastise had already been committed. No human being could possibly have guessed beforehand that his crimes would be punished in that particular way. And after the crimes of the antediluvians had been thus punished, the survivors received a promise that no misconduct on their part would ever be visited upon them in the same way. So that any conceivable utility which the deluge might have had as a warning for the future was utterly destroyed. Equal caprice, though not equal cruelty, was shown towards the builders of the tower of Babel, who were suffered to begin their labours without hindrance, but were afterwards stopped by the confusion of their languages. Why it was wrong to erect such a tower is never stated. Could any of those engaged upon it have guessed that the attempt was one deserving of punishment? Still worse was Jehovah's behaviour to the prophet Balaam, for he first ordered him to go with the men who were sent for him, and then was angry with him because he went.[1] Such conduct was on a level with that of a pettish woman. Instances of barbarous severity may be found in abundance. Nadab and Abihu, sons of Aaron, were devoured by "fire from the Lord," because they had taken their censers, and offered

[1] Num. xxii. 20, 22.

strange fire before him.[1] A man who on the father's side was Egyptian, was ordered to be stoned for blaspheming and cursing the name of the Lord; Jehovah being peculiarly eager in avenging personal affronts.[2] On this occasion no doubt a general law was announced affixing the penalty of stoning to the offence of blasphemy; but the law was *ex post facto* so far as the individual who suffered by its operation was concerned. On another occasion the heads of the people were ordered to be all hung for whoredom with the daughters of Moab, and for idolatry. Phinehas, Aaron's son, seeing an Israelite with a Midianitish woman, ran them both through the body with a javelin; for which heroic exploit against an unprepared man and a defenceless woman he was specially praised; was declared to have turned away God's wrath from Israel, and received a "covenant of peace" for himself and his posterity.[3] At a much later period, when David was causing the ark to be brought back from the Philistines, an unfortunate man who had put out his hand to touch it because the oxen shook it, was immediately slain; an act at which even the pious David was displeased, and which caused him, not unnaturally, to be "afraid before the Lord that day."[4] In the reign of Jeroboam a prophet who had only been guilty of the involuntary error of believing another prophet who had told him a falsehood, was killed by a lion sent expressly for his punishment, while the man who had deceived him escaped scot-free.[5] Another man suffered for refusing to obey the word of a prophet what this one had suffered for

[1] Lev. x. 1, 2. [2] Lev. xxiv. 10–16. [3] Num. xxv. 1–15.
[4] 2 Sam. vi. 6-9. [5] 1 Kings xiii. 1–32.

obeying it. Being desired by one of the "sons of the prophets" to smite him so as to cause a wound, and having declined the office, he was informed that for his disobedience to the voice of the Lord he would be slain by a lion, which accordingly happened.[1] Mercy towards a conquered enemy was sometimes an actual crime. Because he spared Agag, Saul was rejected from being king over Israel, and the Lord repented that he had appointed so weak-minded a man. Samuel, who was made of sterner stuff, had no scruple in carrying out the behests of his God, for he "hewed Agag in pieces before the Lord."[2] In like manner Ahab was reproved for sparing the life of Ben-hadad, King of Syria.[3] The same monarch whose leniency had thus brought him into trouble was afterwards the victim of a sanguinary fraud practised upon him by Jehovah. Tired of his reign, and eager to effect his destruction, the Lord put a lying spirit into the mouth of all his prophets, who were thus induced to prophesy victory in an engagement which actually terminated in his defeat and death.[4] Observe, that however foolish Ahab may have been in believing the false prophets and disbelieving Micaiah, this does not excuse Jehovah, who according to his own chosen spokesman, deliberately arranged this scheme for the overthrow of the king in the court of heaven. Other barbarous deeds followed upon this. To gratify Elijah, a hundred men who were guiltless of any crime whatever, were consumed by fire.[5] To assuage the wounded vanity of Elisha, forty-two little children were eaten by bears.[6] To maintain the glory of the

[1] 1 Kings xx. 35, 36. [2] 1 Sam. xv. [3] 1 Kings xx. 42, 43. [4] 1 Kings xxii. 1-40. [5] 2 Kings i. 9-12. [6] 2 Kings ii. 23, 24.

true God, Elijah slaughtered the prophets of Baal to the number of many hundreds.[1] To re-establish the orthodox faith, Jehu got rid of the worshippers of Baal, collected together by an infamous trick, in one indiscriminate massacre; an atrocity for which he was specially praised and rewarded by "the Lord."[2]

It is needless to prolong the list of cruelties practised upon private individuals. But the subject would be incompletely treated, did we not observe that the same spirit prevailed in the dealings of Jehovah with nations. Thus, when the Israelites were about to enter the land of Canaan, they were desired utterly to destroy the seven nations who possessed it already.[3] When they captured Jericho, they slew all its inhabitants, young and old, except the household of the prostitute with whom their messengers had lodged, and who had shamelessly betrayed her countrymen. Her, with her family, they saved.[4] All the inhabitants of Ai were utterly destroyed.[5] All the inhabitants of Makkedah were utterly destroyed.[6] All the inhabitants of many other places were utterly destroyed.[7] One city alone made peace with Israel; all the rest were taken in battle, and that because Jehovah had deliberately and of set purpose hardened the hearts of their inhabitants, that they might be utterly destroyed.[8]

Such a catalogue of crimes—and the number is by no means exhausted—would be sufficient to destroy the character of any pagan divinity whatsoever. I fail to perceive any reason why the Jews alone should

[1] 1 Kings xviii. 17–40.
[2] 2 Kings x. 18–30.
[3] Deut. vii. 2.
[4] Josh. vi. 1–25.
[5] Josh. viii. 26.
[6] Josh. x. 28.
[7] Josh. x. 29-43, and xi. 11, 14.
[8] Josh. xi. 20.

be privileged to represent their God as guilty of such actions without suffering the inference which in other cases would undoubtedly be drawn—namely, that their conceptions of deity were not of a very exalted order, nor their principles of morals of a very admirable kind. There is, indeed, nothing extraordinary in the fact that, living in a barbarous age, the ancient Hebrews should have behaved barbarously. The reverse would rather be surprising. But the remarkable fact is, that their savage deeds, and the equally savage ones attributed to their God, should have been accepted by Christendom as flowing in the one case from the commands, in the other from the immediate action of a just and beneficent Being. When the Hindus relate the story of Brahma's incest with his daughter, they add that the god was bowed down with shame on account of his subjugation by ordinary passion.[1] But while they thus betray their feeling that even a divine being is not superior to all the standards of morality, no such consciousness is ever apparent in the narrators of the passions of Jehovah. While far worse offences are committed by him, there is no trace in his character of the grace of shame.

Turning now to the legislation which emanated from him, we shall find evidence of the same spirit which has been seen to mark his daily dealings. It is impossible here to examine that legislation in detail, and it may be freely conceded that much of it was well adapted to the circumstances under which it was delivered. Some of the precepts given are indeed trivial, such as the order to the Israelites

[1] O. S. T., vol. i. p. 112.

not to round the corners of their heads, nor mar the corners of their beards,[1] and others are [such as are] merely special to the Hebrew religion. But the mass of enactments may very probably have been wise, or, at least, not conspicuously the reverse. Those to which the chief exception must be taken, are such as demonstrate the essentially inhuman character of the authority from whom they emanated. Thus, death is the penalty affixed to the insignificant offence of Sabbath-breaking.[2] If the nearest relation, or even the wife of his bosom, or the friend who is as his own soul, secretly entice a man to go and worship other gods, he himself is to put the tempter to death, his own hand being the first to fling the stones by which he is to perish.[3] The Inquisition itself could have had no more detestable law than this. If it is a city that is guilty of such heresy, it is to be burnt down, and all its inhabitants put to the sword.[4] The mere worship of pagan divinities, apart from any effort to seduce others, is likewise punished with stoning.[5] In cities not in Palestine, taken in war, all the males only are to be put to death; but in the cities of Palestine itself, nothing that breathes is to be saved alive.[6] A "stubborn and rebellious son" may be put to death by stoning, and that at the instance of his parents.[7] In appearance this terrible process for dealing with a naughty boy is less severe than the *patria potestas* of the Romans, by which the power of life and death was lodged in the father alone. Practically, however,

[1] Lev. xix. 27.
[2] Ex. xxxv. 2.
[3] Deut. xiii. 6–11.
[4] Deut. xiii. 12–16.
[5] Deut. xvii. 2–7.
[6] Deut. xx. 13–18.
[7] Deut. xxi. 18–21.

the exercise of this unlimited *legal* right was prevented to a large extent, for a religious curse rested on the father who even sold his married son, and he could not pronounce sentence on any child till after consulting the nearest blood-relations on both sides, without incurring the same anathema.[1] No doubt the purely legal power of the head of the family was unaffected by these restraints. Human authority still permitted him to expose his children at birth, to sell them, or to sentence them to death. But the difference between Roman and Jewish institutions was, that in Rome, religion sought to mitigate the cruelty of the civil law; in Palestine, religion not only did nothing to soften, but positively sanctioned, by its august commands, the most revolting enactments of barbaric legislation. It is true that no instance is known to history of the employment of this law by Jews against their children, but this can only show that their parental morality was superior to the morality of the divine law. At a much later time than that at which this enactment was given, when the Israelites returned from the Captivity, the same harsh and intolerant spirit as we have observed in their earlier legislation broke forth again. By a cruel measure, enacted by Ezra the representative of Jehovah, and taking the form of a covenant with God, the people were forced to repudiate all their wives who were not of pure Israelitish blood.[2] Nehemiah, who was likewise zealous in the service of Jehovah, was no less an enemy to "outlandish women," and took rather strong measures against those who had married them, such as cursing them, smiting them, plucking off their hair,

[1] Mommsen, History of Rome, vol. i. p. 65. [2] Ezra ix. and x.

and making them swear not to give their sons or daughters in marriage to foreigners.[1]

Such being the moral characteristics of the Hebrew God, can it be said that the intellectual ideas of the divine nature found in the Old Testament are of a highly refined and spiritual order? On the contrary, as compared with the gods of other races, Jehovah is remarkably anthropomorphic and materialistic. He does not approach in spirituality to the higher conceptions of the Hindus, nor is he even equal to those of less subtle and speculative nations. He is on a level with the gods of popular mythologies, but not with those more mysterious powers who often stand above them. The evidence of this proposition is to be found in the whole tenor of the historical books. Thus, in the very beginning of Genesis, we find that he "rested on the seventh day,"[2] as if he were a being altogether apart from the forces of nature, and might leave the world to go on without him. A little later he is found "walking in the garden in the cool of the day."[3] He clearly had a body resembling that of man, for on one occasion Moses was so highly favoured as to be permitted to see his "back parts," and was covered with his hand while he was passing by. His face Moses was not permitted to behold, as it would have caused his death.[4] In order to pass by he "descended" in a cloud, implying local habitation, and at this time he magniloquently proclaimed his own titles and virtues, which he might more gracefully have employed an angel to do for him. Elsewhere it is stated

[1] Neh. xiii. 23–28.
[2] Gen. ii. 2.
[3] Gen. iii. 8.
[4] Ex. xxxiii. 20–23.

that Moses and the elders "saw the God of Israel," and that he had some sort of paved work of sapphire stone under his feet. When Moses went up alone into the mount, "the sight of the glory of the Lord was like devouring fire." God was at this time supposed to be on the mount, and there he held discourse with Moses.[1] In the course of it he says that he will "commune" from above the mercy-seat in the tabernacle, again (as in so many other places) implying occupation of definite space.[2] He promises to "dwell among the children of Israel," that is, to be a national and local God.[3] Confirmation of the view here taken of his limited nature is found in the fact that he thought it necessary to "go down" to Sodom and Gomorrah, to verify the reports which had reached him concerning the conduct of their inhabitants. And when Abraham appealed to him for mercy for those of them who were righteous, his several answers clearly implied that when he went to those cities he would discover how many of them came under that denomination. "If I find in Sodom fifty righteous," and so forth, is the language of one who does not know a fact, but is going to ascertain it. And accordingly at the end of the colloquy "the Lord went his way."[4] So completely anthropomorphic is the conception of deity that, although the expression occurs only in a parable, it is not at variance with the mode in which he is usually spoken of when wine is said "to cheer God and man."[5] Evidently there was nothing shocking to the Hebrew mind in such an expression. And when they pictured their God as

[1] Ex. xxiv. 10–25. [2] Ex. xxv. 22. [3] Ex. xxix. 45, 46.
[4] Gen. xviii. 20–33. [5] Judg. ix. 13.

walking, talking, indignant, angry, repenting, jealous, showing himself to human beings, and generally indulging in the passions of mortals, it was perfectly easy to conceive that wine might exercise the same effect on him as it did on them.

No doubt the Hebrew mythology is free from all that class of stories in which a divine being is represented as making love to or cohabiting with women. Or, to speak more accurately, they never represent Jehovah himself as indulging in such amusements. There is a reminiscence of this form of myth in the statement that before the deluge the sons of God intermarried with the daughters of men;[1] but their supreme Being was free at least from sexual passion. So far as it goes, this is well; but if I had to choose between a God who was somewhat licentious in his relations with mankind, and one who did not stick at deeds of bloodshed of the most outrageous character, I confess I should see no very powerful reason to prefer the latter.

That, in spite of all these drawbacks, there are some better elements in the Hebrew ideal I do not at all deny. The poetical description of God as a "still small voice" is both eloquent and spiritual; and the prayer of Solomon, with its admission that the heaven of heavens cannot contain the Infinite Power who is entreated to dwell in the Temple, is in many respects beautiful and admirable. So also the views of Jehovah attained and uttered by some of the prophets are far loftier than those generally expressed in the historical books. Many of the Psalms, again, are full of beauty in the manner in which they speak of him

[1] Gen. vi. 2.

to whom they are addressed. In a nation so deeply religious as the Jews, and so much given to meditation on God, it was inevitable that the higher class of minds should conceive him more spiritually than the lower, and it is this class to whom we owe the poetical and prophetic writings. It was inevitable also that as civilisation advanced, the grosser elements of the conception, which belonged to a barbarous people, should be eliminated, and that the finer ones should remain. The entire supersession of the older God by the newer was prevented by the fact that the Old Testament was a sacred book, and that hence every one of its statements had to be received as absolutely true. The inconsistency between the wrathful monarch of ancient times and the loving Spirit of more recent ages was sought to be surmounted by those processes of interpretation which have been shown to be invariably adopted when it is desired to bring the infallible Scriptures of any nation into harmony with the opinions of their readers. But happily the language of the historical portions of the Old Testament is singularly plain, and no ingenious manipulation of the text can with the smallest plausibility put aside the obvious meaning of the broad assertions on which is founded the above delineation of the God of Israel.

Section VIII.—The New Testament.

Since a considerable portion of the New Testament has already been dealt with in the life of Jesus, we have only, in the present section, to consider the remaining works of which it is composed. These will not require a very elaborate treatment. They consist of one historical book, continuing the history of the Christian community from the death of its founder till the imprisonment of Paul at Rome, of a series of letters, partly genuine, partly spurious, bearing the names of eminent apostles as their authors, and of one composition somewhat akin in its nature to the writings of the Hebrew prophets. Of these several parts of the New Testament (excluding the Gospels) some of the Epistles are probably the most ancient; but as it would be difficult to establish any precise chronological sequence among the several books, it will be most convenient to begin with that which stands first in actual order.

Subdivision 1.—*The Acts of the Apostles.*

The author of the third gospel, having written the life of Jesus, proceeded to compose, in addition to it, a history of the proceedings of his apostles after his decease. We are greatly indebted to him for having done so, for this book is, notwithstanding some extravagances, of considerable value, and is the most trustworthy of the five historical books in the New Testament. It brought the narrative of events nearer to

the date at which it was written than the gospel could do, and it dealt with events concerning which better evidence was accessible to the writer. There was thus not the same scope for fiction as there had been in the life of Christ. Nevertheless the story of the Acts of the Apostles is by no means free from legendary admixture.

Beginning with the ascension, which has been already noticed in connection with the gospel, it proceeds to relate the choice of a new apostle in place of the unfaithful Judas. The ceremony by which the choice was made evinces a singular superstition on the part of the apostles. Having selected two men, Joseph and Matthias, they simply prayed that God would show which he had chosen. They then drew lots, and the lot fell upon Matthias.[1]

The next important event in the history of the Church thus recruited, was the reception of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost. On this occasion the Christians were all assembled, when suddenly there was a sound like that of strong wind; cloven tongues appeared and sat upon them; they were filled with the Holy Ghost, and suddenly acquired the power of speaking foreign languages.[2] Since the "gift of tongues" has not been unknown in certain communities in recent times, we might perhaps form a tolerably correct notion from the reports of modern observers as to what the scene among the disciples was like. Even, however, without this modern experience, we should not be altogether in the dark as to the character of the phenomenon of which the author of the Acts makes so much. For although it

[1] Acts i. 15–26. [2] Acts ii. 1–13.

is indeed stated that some of the strangers who were present heard each his own language spoken by the disciples, it is added that the conviction produced upon others was that the Christians were drunk. It must have been a wild and singular exhibition which could lead to the formation of such an opinion. But if we wanted further explanation we should find it in the words of Paul, whose strong practical judgment led him to depreciate the value of the gift of tongues as compared with that of preaching. Had this gift consisted in the power of speaking their own languages to foreign nations, there is none to whom it would have been of greater service than the apostle of the Gentiles. Yet it is he who tells us that at a meeting he would rather speak five words with his understanding, that he might teach others also, than ten thousand in a tongue. So that the words spoken "in tongues" were not spoken with the understanding; they were mere sounds without a meaning to him who uttered them. Equally clear is the evidence of Paul to the fact that they were without a meaning to him who heard them. His reason for desiring his correspondents to cultivate the gift of prophesying (or preaching) rather than that of tongues is that "he that speaks in a tongue speaks not to men, but to God, for *nobody* understands him, but in the spirit he speaks mysteries. But he that preaches speaks to men edification, and exhortation, and comfort. He that speaks in a tongue edifies himself; but he that preaches edifies the Church."[1] Tongues, he says further on, are for a sign to unbelievers; that is, they are of use merely to impress the senses of those whose minds cannot yet

[1] 1 Cor. xiv. 2–4.

be appealed to. But if the unbelieving or unlearned should happen to enter a meeting where the disciples were all speaking with tongues, they would consider them mad: a striking testimony to the tumultuous character of scenes like that presented by the enthusiastic assembly of the Christians at Pentecost. Hence Paul desires that two, or at most three, should speak with tongues at a time, and that there should always be somebody to interpret, in other words, to translate nonsense into sense. Without an interpreter, he will not sanction any exercise of his peculiar faculty on the part of the inspired linguist.[1]

To satisfy the doubts of those who attributed the sudden attainments of the apostles to intoxicating drinks, Peter delivered a discourse, which ended in the addition of 3000 members to the rising sect. It is remarkable that these new members at once became communists, both they and all the disciples having all things in common; a noteworthy indication of what was required by the religion of Christ as understood by his immediate disciples.[2] Further evidence, if any were needed, of the communistic character of the Church is contained at the end of the fourth chapter, while the fifth informs us of the tolerably severe measures taken to enforce it. "There was one heart and one soul among the multitude of those who believed, nor did a single one say that any of the things he possessed was his own; but they had all things common." Unhappily the one heart and one mind did not extend to Ananias or to his wife Sapphira, for this naughty couple "sold a possession and kept back part of the price." But Peter was not thus to

[1] 1 Cor. xiv. 1–28. [2] Acts ii. 14–47.

be taken in. It does not appear from the account that Ananias was asked whether the sum he produced was the whole price of the land, or that he told any falsehood regarding it. However, Peter remarked that he might have kept either the property or its price, had he thought proper, and charged him with lying to God; whereupon the poor man fell down dead. About three hours later, Sapphira came in; and she distinctly stated that the sum produced by Ananias was the full price. Peter told her that the feet of those who had buried her husband were at the door, and would carry her out too. She then fell down at his feet, and expired in her turn.[1]

No wonder that "great fear came upon all the Church" when they heard these things. Peter's proceedings were indeed alarming, and could we for a moment accept the account of his historian, we should have no option but to hold him guilty of the wilful murder of Sapphira. He knew, according to his own statement, what the effect of his words upon this woman would be, and he should have abstained from any expression that could bring about so terrible a catastrophe. Happily, we may reject the whole story as either a fiction or a perversion of fact. Had it been true, it would have called for very much sterner measures than those taken by the Sanhedrim, who, having already desired Peter and John to keep silence about the new religion, now merely imprisoned the apostles, and afterwards, on the prudent advice of Gamaliel, determined to release them; not indeed till after they had beaten them and again prohibited their propagandist efforts.[2]

[1] Acts iv. 31–v. 11. [2] Acts v. 17–42.

It is interesting to observe that Luke effects the deliverance of the apostles from prison by the intervention of an angel, and that at a later period, when Peter had been imprisoned by Herod, he again gets him out by means of an angel who appears to him while sleeping, and at whose presence his chains fall off.[1] This is quite in accordance with the proceedings of the same author in the gospel, where his partiality for angels as part of his theatrical machinery has been shown to be characteristic.

The infant community was now increasing in numbers, and along with this increase there arose the customary consequences—dissension and mutual distrust. We are fortunate in possessing in the Acts an account of the very first quarrel in the Church; the earliest symptom of those discords and hostilities, which, since that time, have so incessantly raged within her limits. It was on a question of money; the Greeks murmuring against the Hebrews, because they thought their widows were neglected in the daily ministration. The apostles tided over the immediate difficulty by appointing subordinate officers to attend to matters of business. The plan succeeded; but their peace was soon to be disturbed again by graver questions.[2]

Among those appointed to superintend the pecuniary interests of the Church was one named Stephen. This man is reported to have performed great wonders and miracles, but some of the Jews accused him of blasphemy, and after an eloquent defence, which to Jewish ears amounted to an admission of the charge, he was sentenced to death by stoning. Foremost in

[1] Acts xii. 1–19. [2] Acts vi. 1–8.

the execution of the sentence was a man named Saul, who was conspicuous at this time for the bitterness with which he pursued the Christians, entering their private houses, and causing them to be imprisoned.[1]

If any proof were needed of the entire conscientiousness of the Jewish persecutors of Christianity at this time we should find it in the character of Saul. Of the honesty of his religious zeal, of the single-minded sense of duty from which he acted in his anti-Christian period, his subsequent career makes it impossible to entertain a doubt. Men like the apostle Paul are not made out of selfish, dishonest, or cruel natures. He was at the martyrdom of Stephen as honourable and fearless an upholder of the ancient faith as he was afterwards of the new. He himself several times refers in his writings to his persecution of the Church, and always in the tone of a man who had nothing to be ashamed of but a mistake in judgment. As touching the righteousness which is in the law, he tells us he was blameless.[2] And although in intellectual power he was doubtless above the average of his class, in point of genuine devotion to his creed, he may fairly be taken as a type of the men with whom he consented to act.

Saul had probably been impressed by the conduct of the Christians, whom he had so ruthlessly delivered up to justice. At any rate the subject of the Christian religion had taken great hold upon his mind, for on his way to Damascus he saw a vision which induced him to become himself a follower of Jesus. It is unfortunate that we have no detailed

[1] Acts vi. 9–viii. 3. [2] Phil. iii. 6.

account of the nature of the event which led to his conversion from Paul himself. He often alludes to it, but nowhere describes it.

The most important passage bearing upon the subject is in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, where he thus mysteriously refers to his experience on this occasion: "I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago (whether in the body I do not know, whether out of the body I do not know) such an one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man (whether in the body, whether out of the body, God knows), that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter."[1] So far as it goes, this account does not very well agree with that of the Acts, since there we are told exactly what were the words Paul heard, and what he answered. We are left in doubt then whether the conversation between Christ and the apostle there related rests on the authority of Paul himself, or represents merely the imagination of others as to what might have passed between them. But that Paul saw some kind of vision, which he himself believed to be a vision of Christ, there can be no doubt.

From Luke we have two versions of this incident, one in the form of historical narrative, the other in that of a speech put into the mouth of Paul. According to these he saw a light, and heard a voice saying, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" On inquiry, he learnt that the voice emanated from Jesus, and he was desired to proceed to Damascus, where further instructions would be given him. Luke has not

[1] 2 Cor. xii. 2–4.

taken sufficient pains to make his two versions harmonise, for in the first we are told that his companions heard a voice, but saw no man; in the second that they saw the light, but did not hear the voice of him that spoke.[1] At Damascus a man named Ananias, directed also by a vision, went to Saul to restore his sight, which had been destroyed for the moment by the brilliancy of the celestial light. After this, Saul, subsequently called Paul, escaping from the pursuit of the Jews who had designs upon his life, began to preach in the name of Jesus.[2]

Another convert of some consideration, from his official position and from the fact that he was a heathen, was added to the community about this time. This was Cornelius, the Centurion of the Italian band. Cornelius was a religious man, much given to prayer. Tired perhaps of visions, of which there had been two in the last chapter and was to be another in this, Luke introduces his angel—a sort of supernumerary ever ready to appear when wanted—to effect the conversion of Cornelius. The angel told him to apply to Peter, now at Joppa, for further advice as to what he should do. Meanwhile Peter had on his part been prepared by a vision of unclean beasts, which he was desired to eat, for the reception of the Gentile embassy, and the admission of Gentiles to the flock. He accordingly proceeded to Cæsarea, where Cornelius was, and baptized both him and other heathens, upon whom, to the great astonishment of the Jews, the Holy Ghost was poured out and the gift of tongues conferred. Thus did the

[1] Acts ix. 7, and xxii. 9. [2] Acts ix. 1–31.

Church of Christ begin, timidly and feeling her way with caution, to extend her boundaries beyond the limits of the Hebrew people.[1]

Some scandal was created in the congregation at Jerusalem by Peter's violation of Jewish rules in dining with uncircumcised people, but there was no gainsaying a vision like that which he produced in reply. Shortly after these events the apostle James, one of those two brothers whose mother had petitioned that they might sit on two thrones, one on each side of Jesus, when his kingdom came, was executed by Herod, the tetrarch; who also imprisoned Peter, but was unable to keep him on account of the angelic intervention mentioned above. The death of this monarch from a painful internal disease, is curiously perverted by the writer into a sudden judgment of God, inflicted upon him because he accepted divine honours at the hands of his flatterers.[2]

The history now proceeds to follow the fortunes of Paul. It is stated that there were at Antioch certain prophets and teachers, who were inspired by the Holy Ghost to appoint Barnabas and Saul to the work whereunto they were called. Having laid their hands upon them, they sent them away. Paul now began to travel from place to place, making converts among the heathen. At Paphos he met with a Jewish sorcerer named Elymas, whom he caused to be blind for a season, thereby inducing the Roman proconsul Sergius Paulus to believe in Christianity, which had thus shown itself able to produce more powerful sorcerers than the rival creed.[3]

[1] Acts x. [2] Acts xi. xii. [3] Acts xiii. 1–12.

It is a striking proof of the liberality of the Jews at this period that when Paul and his companions had gone into the synagogue of Antioch in Pisidia, the rulers of the synagogue invited them to speak; a freedom which even in the present day would scarcely be granted in any Christian Church to those who were regarded as heretics. Paul took advantage of the proffered opportunity to deliver a speech which ended in the conversion of some of the Jews. On the following Sabbath great crowds came to hear Paul, but the Jews, as was natural, opposed him and contradicted him. After this they stirred up pious women and the principal men of the city against Paul and Barnabas, and (it is stated) expelled them from their coasts.[1] These apostles having already determined to go,[2] it was not a severe treatment that was thus inflicted on them. They, however, left Antioch in no very charitable frame of mind, for they shook off the dust of their feet against its inhabitants.[3]

The cure of an impotent man at Lystra led the multitude of that place to adore Paul and Barnabas as gods. Paul, as the orator, they called Hermes, and Barnabas, Zeus. The priest of Zeus brought oxen and garlands, and intended to sacrifice to them, an intention which the people were barely prevented, by the indignant protests of the two apostles, from carrying into effect.[4] This was not the only occasion on which Paul was taken for a god; for when he was cast by shipwreck on the island of Melita, his escape from injury by a venomous reptile which had fastened on

[1] Acts xiii. 50.
[2] Acts xiii. 46.
[3] Acts xiii. 14–52.
[4] Acts xiv. 8–18.

his hand was regarded by the savages of that island as a proof of divinity.[1]

Extremely similar to these incidents, especially to the first, is a circumstance recounted by Sir Francis Drake in his voyage of circumnavigation. His vessel having sprung a leak, while he was exploring the coast of North America, was brought to anchor to be repaired, and the sailors landed to build tents and make a fort for purposes of defence. The natives approached them in companies, armed, and as if designing an attack, but it appeared that they had "no hostile meaning or intent;" for when they came near, they stood "as men ravished in their minds, with the sight of such things as they never had seen or heard of before that time: their errand being rather with submission and feare to worship us as gods, than to have any warre with us as with mortall men. Which thing, as it did partly show itself at that instant, so did it more and more manifest itself afterwards, during the whole time of our abode amongst them." The General gave them materials for clothing, "withall signifying unto them we were no gods, but men, and had neede of such things to cover our own shame; teaching them to use them for the same ends, for which cause wee did eate and drinke in their presence, giving them to understand that without that wee could not live, and therefore were but men as well as they" ("we also are men of like passions with you."[2]) "Notwithstanding nothing could persuade them, nor remove that opinion which they had conceived of us, that wee should be gods."[3]

And, as the heathens of Lystra were eager to

[1] Acts xxviii. 1–6. [2] Acts xiv. 15. [3] W. E., p. 120.

sacrifice to Barnabas and Paul, so those of this country actually conferred this mark of divinity upon some of the white men in the company of Drake, nor were the utmost protests of the travellers of avail to put a stop to what appeared to them, just as it did to the apostles, an impious rite, derogating from the honour due to the true God. The people had come in a large body, accompanied by their king, to make a formal presentation of the sovereignty to him, and the king had made over into his hands the insignia of the royal office, when the scene now described by Sir Francis took place.

"The ceremonies of this resigning and receiving of the Kingdome being thus performed," says Sir Francis, "the common sort, both of men and women, leaving the king and his guard about him, with our Generall, dispersed themselves among our people, taking a diligent view or survey of every man; and finding such as pleased their fancies (which commonly were the youngest of us), they presently enclosing them about offred their sacrifices unto them crying out with lamentable shreekes and moanes, weeping and scratching and tearing their very flesh off their faces with their nailes; neither were it the women alone which did this, but even old men, roaring and crying out, were as violent as the women were.

"We groaned in spirit to see the power of Sathan so farre prevaile in seducing these, so harmlesse soules, and laboured by all meanes, both by shewing our great dislike, and when that served not, by violent withholding of their hands from that madnesse, directing them (by our eyes and hands lift up towards heaven) to the living God whom they ought to serve; but so mad were they upon their Idolatry, that forcible withholding them would not prevaile (for as soon as they could get liberty to their hands againe, they would be as violent as they were before) till such time, as they whom they worshipped were conveyed from them into the tents, whom yet as men besides themselves, they would with fury and outrage seeke to have again."[1]

[1] W. E., p. 129.

We are again reminded of the Acts: "And with these sayings scarce restrained they the people, that they had not done sacrifice unto them."[1]

An unfortunate change in the popular mind soon occurred; for on the arrival of some Jews who stirred them up to hostility against the Apostles, they flew from one extravagance to another, and stoned Paul so severely that he was left by them for dead. But as the disciples stood about him he rose, and was able to continue his journey on the next day.

The Christians at Jerusalem were now required to consider the difficult question of the circumcision of the Gentiles; their decision upon which has already been discussed. After the council Paul (who had returned to Antioch) proposed to revisit the places where he had formerly preached, and Barnabas intended to go with him. But a difference of opinion as to whether they should take Mark with them led to a violent quarrel between these two apostles; as the result of which Paul chose Silas as his companion, and left Barnabas to pursue his own course with his friend Mark.[2]

The writer now follows the fortunes of Paul in his missionary work in various countries, and it is remarkable that in the sixteenth chapter he drops the third person, and begins to speak in the first person plural, implying that he himself was one of the company. The fact that from this point onwards the book becomes practically not the Acts of the Apostles, but the Acts of Paul, who is evidently the hero of the story, indicates an author who belonged to the Pauline section of the Church, and to whom Paul was the chief living embodiment of the Christian faith. Who this

[1] Acts xiv. 18 [2] Acts xv.

author was—whether Silas, or some other companion—it would be hard to say, but he seems to have written under the direct inspiration of Paul himself.

Increased by the addition of Timotheus, the party, guided by a vision seen by Paul of a Macedonian entreating them to come, went into Macedonia. At Philippi they met with some success among women, making particular friends with a purple-seller named Lydia. But the conversion of a divining girl who was a source of profit to her employers, led to the imprisonment of Paul and Silas, from which, however, an opportune earthquake set them free.[1]

At Athens Paul made a speech on the Areopagos, in which he ingeniously availed himself of an altar he had noticed, inscribed "To an Unknown God," to maintain that this unknown God was no other than the Jehovah of the Jews.[2] At Corinth he was allowed to preach every Sabbath in the synagogue (as he had done at Thessalonica, and did again at Ephesus), another evidence of the tolerant spirit of the Jews as compared with Christians. Not, of course, that the Jews were not bigoted adherents of their narrow creed, or that they had any scruple about supporting it by physical force; but they were willing to allow those who had a reformation to propose to be heard in the synagogues. The effect, as might be expected, was to embitter those who remained orthodox against Paul. But an attempt on their part to bring him under the jurisdiction of the civil tribunals failed, and after remaining a long time at Corinth, he went on to Ephesus, and thence continued his course through

[1] Acts xvi. [2] Acts xvii. 16–34.

Galatia and Phrygia.[1] An eloquent and able Alexandrian, Apollos by name, came to Ephesus, after Paul had left it. He was a believer in John the Baptist, and was received into the Church by Paul's friends, Aquila and Priscilla, whom he had left behind.

A singular incident occurred on a subsequent visit of Paul's to Ephesus. He found some disciples there and asked them whether they had received the Holy Ghost. They replied that they did not even know whether there was a Holy Ghost. Such crass ignorance must have astonished Paul, who inquired into what they had been baptized. They said, into John's baptism, and the apostle accordingly baptized them in the name of Jesus, with the striking result that they immediately received the Holy Ghost and began to speak in tongues.[2] Curious incidental evidence is thus supplied by the case of Apollos and by that of these Ephesians of the existence of a Johannine sect which Christianity superseded and swept into oblivion; and it is remarkable, as affording a presumption that the Baptist did not regard himself as the mere precursor of Christ, that these Johannists do not appear to have been looking forward to any further development of their principles such as the religion of Jesus supplied.

At Ephesus Paul preached for three months in the synagogue, and then, meeting with much opposition, betook himself to a public room, where he disputed daily. But after he had taught two years, a dangerous riot was excited by the tradesmen who dealt in silver shrines for the Ephesian Artemis, and Paul, after the disturbance had been quelled, determined to

[1] Acts xviii. 1–23. [2] Acts xix. 1–7.

go into Macedonia.[1] While he was preaching at Troas, a young man, who had fallen asleep, fell from the window at which he was sitting, and was supposed to have been killed. Paul, however, declared that he was still alive, and told them not to be disturbed. This opinion proved to be correct. To this simple incident the historian, by stating that he was "taken up dead," has contrived to give the aspect of a miracle. The case exactly resembles the supposed miracle of Jesus, discussed above,[2] and is another illustration of the facility with which natural occurrences may, by the turn of a phrase, be converted into marvels.[3]

No arguments were now availing to dissuade the apostle from visiting Jerusalem, where it was well known that peril awaited him. Arrived at the centre of Judaism, his first business was to clear himself from the suspicions entertained of his rationalistic tendencies by taking a vow according to the Mosaic ritual. After this the Asiatic Jews raised a clamour against him which ended in a dangerous tumult. From the violent death which threatened him at the hands of the enraged multitude he was rescued by the Roman troops, under cover of whose protection he made his defence before the people.[4] It naturally did not conciliate the Jews; and the Roman officer who had made him prisoner, having been deterred from the application of torture by Paul's Roman citizenship, desired his accusers to appear in court to prefer their charges on the following day.[5] But when the case came on, Paul ingeniously contrived to set the

[1] Acts xix. 8–xx. 1. [2] Supra, vol. i. p. 320–323. [3] Acts xx. 7–12.
[4] Acts xxi. 27–xxii. 21. [5] Acts xxii. 22–30.

Pharisees against the Sadducees by the assertion that he himself was a Pharisee, and that he was charged with believing in a future state. By this not very candid shift he obtained the support of the Pharisaic party, and produced among his prosecutors a scene of clamour and discord from which it was thought expedient to remove him. Defeated in the courts of law, the more embittered of his enemies formed a scheme of private assassination which was revealed to the captain of the guard by Paul's nephew, and from which he was rescued by being sent by night under a strong military escort to the governor of the province, a man named Felix.[1] Ananias, the high priest, and others of the prosecutors, followed Paul to Cæsarea in five days, but the nature of their charges was such that they made little impression upon the mind of the governor. He nevertheless kept Paul in confinement, perhaps hoping (as the narrator suggests) that he would receive a bribe to set him free.[2] After two years Festus succeeded Felix, and when this governor visited Jerusalem he was entreated by the priests to send for Paul, which, however, he refused to do, and required the prosecutors to come to him at Cæsarea. They went, and charged Paul with offences which it is said they could not prove. When Festus asked him whether he would go to Jerusalem to be tried by him, Paul replied that he ought to be tried at Cæsar's judgment-seat, as he had done the Jews no wrong, and that he appealed to Cæsar. The policy of this appeal was questionable, for after a time Festus was visited by King Agrippa, to whom he related the facts of the case; and the king, having heard the statement

[1] Acts xxiii. [2] Acts xxiv.

of the prisoner himself, declared that he might have been set at liberty had he not appealed to Cæsar.[1]

Paul therefore was now sent with a gang of prisoners to Rome, on the way to which the ship he was in was wrecked off the island of Melita, where the winter months were accordingly passed. Here he cured numerous inhabitants of diseases, and received high honours in consequence. After three months an Alexandrine vessel conveyed the shipwrecked company to the capital. Arrived at Rome, Paul summoned the Jews to come to the house where, guarded by a soldier, he was allowed to live, and endeavoured to convert them. Meeting with indifferent success, he dismissed them with insulting words drawn from Isaiah, and roundly informed them that the salvation of God was now sent to the Gentiles, and that these would hear it.[2] What was the ultimate fate of this great teacher of Christianity, whether his case was ever heard, and if so, how it was decided; whether he lived a prisoner, or was set free, or died a martyr, we have no historical information, and it is useless, in the absence of evidence, to attempt to conjecture.

SUBDIVISION 2.—*The Epistles.*

In the epistles which have been preserved to us, and which are no doubt but a few rescued from a much larger correspondence, the apostolic authors enforce upon their respective converts or congregations the doctrines of Christianity as understood by them. They explain the relation of Jesus to the Jewish law; they inculcate morality; they reply to objections;

[1] Acts xxv. xxvi. [2] Acts xxvii. xxviii.

they hold out the prospect of the speedy revolution which they expect. Since their opinions on all the topics upon which they touch cannot, within the limits of a general treatise, be discussed in detail, all that is necessary now is to glance rapidly at the more general characteristics of the several writers.

A letter addressed to the twelve tribes scattered abroad, and traditionally ascribed to the apostle James, may best be taken in connection with an anonymous epistle addressed to the Hebrews. They have these two features in common, that they are written to Jewish Christians, and that they discuss the relation of faith to works. It is true that this question is treated by their authors from opposite points of view. Theological controversy began early in the history of the Christian Church, and its first controversial treatises have been embodied in the Canon of its Sacred Books. It appears, moreover, to be highly probable, not only that the two epistles were written on opposite sides of a disputed question, but that the chapter in the one dealing with that question was designed as an answer to the corresponding chapter in the other. It may be difficult to say which was the original statement, which the reply; but when we find the very same examples chosen by both, the one maintaining that Abraham and Rahab were justified by faith, the other that they were justified by works, it is not easy to believe that so exact a coincidence in the mode of treating their subject was accidental. The more argumentative tone taken by James—as of one answering an opponent—induces me to believe that his epistle was the later of the two. The author of the Hebrews insists upon the paramount necessity

of faith; showing by a number of historical examples that the conduct of the great heroes of the Hebrew race, besides that of many inferior models of excellence, was wholly due to this cause. The author of James, on the contrary, strenuously maintains that faith is of no value without works, and, as if endeavouring to set aside the force of the examples produced on the other side, selects for his consideration the history of two persons who had been held up as illustrations of the doctrine that we are justified by faith. Abraham, he says, was not justified by faith only, but by works; for he offered Isaac on the altar, which was a very practical illustration of his faith.[1] Rahab again, who according to you was saved from destruction with the unbelievers by faith, was in reality justified by works, for it was a work to receive the messengers and send them out another way.[2] Not that we deny the importance of faith altogether; but we do deny the exclusive position which you, in your Epistle to the Hebrews, assign to it. Without works faith is a dead, unproductive thing; like a body without its animating spirit. Indeed a man may say to him who relies upon his faith alone, Show me your faith without works, and I will show you mine by my works. What is the use of a faith unaccompanied by works? can it save any one by itself? Certainly not, answers James; Certainly, says the author of the Hebrews. The whole question turns on those hair-splitting distinctions in which theologians have ever delighted; for while the one party considers faith as the producing cause of good actions, the other treats good actions as the evidence of

[1] James ii. 21–23. [2] James ii. 25.

faith. Neither the one nor the other really meant to question the necessity of either element in the combination.

In other respects there is a broad difference between the two epistles. That to the Hebrews is Judaic in tone and spirit; its main object being to prove that Christ is a sort of high-priest, endowed with authority to set aside the old Jewish institutions and substitute something better. James is more catholic and more practical. He insists upon the necessity of not only hearing, but doing the word; of keeping the whole moral law; of bridling the tongue, and of showing no respect to persons on account of their worldly position. He is extremely hostile to the rich, and draws a very unfavourable picture of their conduct.[1] He encourages the poor Christians to endure patiently till Christ comes, which will be very soon.[2] Lastly, he emphatically urges the duty of proselytism upon his flock; remarking that one who converts another when wandering from the truth, both saves the soul of the wanderer and hides a multitude of his own sins.[3]

Two epistles are attributed to the apostle Peter, the first of which, addressed to the strangers in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, purports to be written from Babylon. He holds out to his correspondents the hope of salvation which they have through Jesus, which is a source of joy, notwithstanding their present troubles. Among other precepts he counsels husbands and wives as to their mutual behaviour; exhorting wives to be obedient, and not to care too much for dress; and requiring husbands to honour

[1] James ii. 6, 7, and v. 1–6. [2] James v. 7, 8.
[3] James v. 19, 20.

their wives as the weaker vessels.[1] The Second Epistle of Peter would appear to be by a rather late author, for he has read the epistles of Paul. He is troubled about "false teachers," who introduce "heresies of destruction," and denounces them in no measured terms.[2] Having, as above described, comforted the Christians for the long delay in the second coming of the Saviour, he exhorts them not to be led away by the error of the wicked, but to grow in grace and in the knowledge of their Lord.[3]

Of the three epistles bearing the name of John, the first only is of any considerable length. The style of this epistle is extremely simple, and it reads like the kindly talk of an old man to children. He tells his flock not to sin, not to love the world, and to love one another. So much does he keep to these purely general maxims, that it would be difficult to gather any really useful instruction from his benevolent garrulity. It is characteristic of him to insist again and again upon love as the cardinal virtue of a Christian. Besides this, perhaps the most definite advice he gives is to pray for anything desired, and to entreat of God the forgiveness of a brother who has committed a sin not unto death.[4] With great self-complacency he calmly asserts that he and his friends are of God, and that the whole world lies in wickedness;[5] a pleasant mode of putting those towards whom it was impossible to practise the love about which he spoke outside the pale of brotherhood.

The writer of John's second epistle, addressed to a lady and her children, illustrates the kind of charity

[1] 1 Pet. iii. 1–7. [2] 2 Pet. ii. [3] 2 Pet. iii. 17, 18.
[4] 1 John v. 14–16. [5] 1 John v. 19.

resulting from such views as this, when he tells them not to receive into their house, nor bid "farewell" to any one who does not hold correct doctrines.[1] The third epistle, written to Gaius, contains little beyond matters of purely personal interest. The Epistle of Jude, who calls himself brother of James, denounces certain "ungodly men," who have "crept in unawares," and are doing great mischief in the Church. It is principally interesting from its reference to the legend of the contest of Michael the archangel with the devil for the body of Moses, which popular tale the writer seems to accept as unquestionably authentic.[2]

Having thus referred to the writings which bear, whether correctly or not, the names of the original apostles of Jesus, we come to those of one who was far greater than any of these—the apostle who was not converted until after the death of his Master. Paul, to whom the great majority of the epistles preserved in the New Testament are ascribed, and by whom many of them were undoubtedly written, is the central figure of the apostolic age, and the one who redeems it from the somewhat unintellectual character it would otherwise have had. Through him it principally was that Christianity passed from the condition of a Jewish sect to that of a comprehensive religion. What Christ himself had been unable to do, he did. What the apostles of Christ shrunk from attempting, he accomplished. He himself was not unconscious of the magnitude of his labours. Hence there is noticeable now and then in his writings, though veiled under respectful phrases,

[1] 2 John 10. [2] Jude 9.

a sort of intellectual contempt for the older apostles, who were not always prepared for the thoroughgoing measures which appeared to him so obviously expedient. He is extremely anxious not to be thought one whit inferior to them by reason of his comparatively late appointment to the apostleship. He carefully rebuts the suspicion that he acted in subordination to them, or even in conjunction with them, after his conversion. His course, he is anxious to let every one know, was taken in entire independence of the Church at Jerusalem. Moreover, he insists emphatically upon his personal qualifications. Was any one a Hebrew? so was he. Had others received visions or revelations? so had he. Had others been persecuted? so had he. He is fond of dwelling upon his individual history in order to support his claims. Thus he tells us that in former times he persecuted the Church of God, and that he was more Jewish than the Jews, being even more zealous than they of the traditions of his fathers. It was therefore entirely by special revelation from God, and not by any human agency whatever, that he was consecrated to his present work. Indeed his revelations were so abundant that it needed a "thorn in the flesh" to prevent him from being too proud of them—a work, however, in which the thorn was not entirely successful. His sufferings for the sake of the gospel afforded him another and more legitimate cause of satisfaction. He says of these that he received thirty-nine stripes from the Jews on five occasions; that he was thrice beaten with rods; once stoned; thrice shipwrecked; a day and night in the deep (in an open boat?); often in all sorts of perils, in watchings, cold and

thirst, hunger and nakedness. Once too he escaped from arrest at Damascus, which does not seem a very serious calamity.[1]

Now the object of all these autobiographical statements is evidently to place himself on a level with other apostles who might seem at first to be more highly privileged than he was. Not so, he contends: if they are ministers of Christ, I am quite as much so; if they saw Christ before his death, I have seen him after it; if they have laboured in his cause, I have laboured more; if they have suffered for his sake, I have suffered more. Hence my authority is in every respect equal to theirs, and should there be a difference of opinion between us you must believe me, your pastor, rather than them. Nay, even if an angel from heaven should preach any other gospel than that which I have preached, you must not believe him: much more then must you disbelieve an apostle. Besides, appearances are deceptive, and as Satan may appear in the character of an angel of light, so the ministers of Satan may, and do appear in the character of apostles of Christ.[2] There was therefore a section of the Church—probably the Judaic section, under the guidance of one of the original apostles—with whom Paul was at issue, and whom he considered it incumbent upon him to oppose by every argument in his power. These are they whom he refers to as "troubling" the Galatians, and perverting the gospel of Christ.[3]

Such was the view taken by Paul of his function in the rising sect. Whatever may have been its

[1] 2 Cor. xi. 22–28.—Gal. i. 11–24. [2] 2 Cor. xi. 13–15.—Gal. i. 8.
[3] Gal. i. 7.

logical justification, it was fully justified by facts. In power of reasoning, in grasp of principles, in comprehensiveness of view, he was not only "not a whit behind the chiefest apostles," but far before them. His letters are by far the most remarkable of the writings which the New Testament contains. They evince a mind almost overburdened by the mass of feelings struggling for expression. He is profoundly penetrated with the new truth he has discovered, or rather which Christ has discovered to him, and he seems to have scarcely time to consider how he may best express it. His mind, though wealthy in ideas and fertile in applying them to practice, is not always clear. It seems rather to struggle with its thoughts than to command them. Hence a certain confusedness in style, a crowding together of notions in a single sentence, and a want of logical arrangement in his presentation of a subject, which render his epistles not altogether easy reading. It may have been those characteristics which caused another apostle (or one who wrote in that apostle's name) to say that there were some things in the writings of his beloved brother Paul that were "hard to be understood."[1]

When, however, the uncouth style is surmounted, the thoughts will be found well worthy of consideration. Of all the writers in the New Testament Paul is the one who presents the largest materials for intellectual reflection. Whether or not we agree in his views, we can scarcely refuse to consider his arguments. And herein he is peculiar among his associates. He is the only one of the canonical writers who has any

[1] 2 Pet. iii. 16.

notion of presenting arguments for consideration at all. While others dogmatise, he reasons. He may reason badly, but he has at least the merit of being able to enter in some degree into the views of his opponents, and of attempting to reply to them on rational grounds.

Another striking feature of the mind of Paul is its robustness. Brought up a Pharisee, a sect devoted to extending the regulations of the law to the utmost minutiæ, he nevertheless rose completely above the domination of trifles. Even matters which in most religions are regarded as of capital importance, he treated as of little moment in themselves. Ceremonies, observances, outward forms of every kind he held in slight esteem in comparison with moral conduct. Not the mere knowledge of the Jewish law or the power of teaching it to others, is of any avail, but the observance of its ethical precepts.[1] Uncircumcision is just as good as circumcision, provided the uncircumcised man keep the law. The true Jew is not he who is a Jew outwardly, nor true circumcision that performed upon the flesh. He is the true Jew who is one inwardly, and that is true circumcision which is in the heart.[2] Indeed, in the renovated condition which is effected by Christianity, there is neither Greek nor Jew; neither circumcision nor uncircumcision; neither barbarian, Scythian, slave, nor freeman; but Christ is everything and in everything.[3] In the same rationalistic spirit he lays down the admirable rule that external forms are valuable only to those who think them so. One man believes he may eat everything; another eats

[1] Rom. ii. 17–23. [2] Rom. ii. 24–29. [3] Col. iii. 11.—Gal. iii. 28.

only herbs. One man esteems all days alike; another esteems one day above another. The freethinker must not despise the one who holds himself bound by such things, nor must this latter condemn the freethinker. The really important matter is that every one should have a complete conviction of his own. In that case, whatever conduct he pursues in these trivialities, being dictated by his conscience, is religious conduct. On the one side, the more scrupulous must not pass judgment on the less scrupulous, that being the office of Christ; but, on the other side, the less scrupulous must endeavour not to give offence to the more scrupulous. In illustration of this doctrine Paul confesses that to him personally the Jewish distinction between clean and unclean meat is totally unmeaning; yet if his brother were grieved by his eating the so-called unclean meats, he would rather give up the practice than destroy by his meat one for whom Christ had died. All things, indeed, are pure in themselves, yet it is not well to eat flesh or drink wine if another is scandalised thereby. We who are strong-minded, and have surmounted these childish scruples of our forefathers, must bear the infirmities of the weak rather than please ourselves.[1]

Certainly when the things are in themselves totally indifferent, the principle of concession to the superstitions of minds governed by traditional beliefs may sometimes be advantageously adopted. But the importance of protesting against the bondage exercised by such beliefs over human life is also not to be underrated, and Paul seems scarcely to give it

[1] Rom. xiv. xv. 1.

sufficient weight in the preceding argument. No doubt on the ground of policy, and in reference to the desirability of keeping the members of the nascent sect from internal quarrels, Paul was right; but a principle which in certain cases may be expedient for a given end, is not to be set up as a universal rule of ethics. Nor is it obvious that Paul intended to do this. He himself, if questioned, would probably have admitted that there were limits beyond which concession ought not to go, those limits being fixed by the consideration that such concession, if pushed too far, must end in the perpetual subordination of the whole of the Christian body to the weaknesses of its least enlightened members. The morality expressed in the lines

> "Leave thou thy sister when she prays
> Her early heaven, her happy views,
> Nor thou with shadowed hint confuse
> A life that leads melodious days,"

is good morality under certain conditions, but there is too great a tendency on the part of those who retain their "early heaven" to press this conduct upon those whose "faith has centre everywhere, nor cares to fix itself to form." It ought not to be forgotten that but for the Christian disregard of forms, persevered in in despite of the scandal to the Jews, Christianity must always have remained a branch of Judaism.

A peculiar merit to be set to Paul's account is, that he is the only one of all the writers in the New Testament who treats the supremely important question of the relations of the sexes, a subject so remarkably overlooked by Christ himself. Whether the

guidance he affords his converts on this head is good guidance or not, he does at least attempt to guide them. Let us notice first what he considers abnormal relations, and then proceed to what he lays down as a normal one. In the first Epistle to the Corinthians he is loud in his denunciations of a man who cohabited with his father's wife, the father being, I presume, deceased. Whether the son had married his stepmother, or merely lived with her, is not altogether clear, since, in either case, the apostle might brand their connection with the title of fornication. However, he condemns it utterly and without reference to any accompanying circumstances, desiring the Corinthian community to deliver up the man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, in the name and with the power of their Lord Jesus, in order that his spirit might be saved at the day of judgment.[1] Here then we have an early example of excommunication, accompanied by the formula to be used in performing the solemnity.

That the severe reproof bestowed by Paul upon the Corinthians for permitting such conduct greatly affected them, we gather from the tenderer language employed in the subsequent epistle, where he admits having at one moment repented that he had caused them so much sorrow, though he soon saw that it had been for their good.[2] It is gratifying, also, to find that his tone towards the unfortunate individual who had been excommunicated at his desire is greatly softened, and that he desires the Corinthians to forgive him, and receive him back into their body, lest he should be swallowed up with too much sorrow.[3] It would have been interesting had he

[1] 1 Cor. v. [2] 2 Cor. vii. 8–13. [3] 2 Cor. ii. 6, 7.

informed us why he considered cohabitation with a stepmother so terrible a crime, but such a recurrence to first principles was not to be expected. He, no doubt, acted on a purely instinctive sentiment of repugnance to such an arrangement.

A second kind of relation between the sexes which the apostle condemns is that of prostitution. Here he has not left us equally in the dark as to the grounds upon which his condemnation is founded. Not only does he prohibit prostitution to the Christians, but he tells them exactly why they ought not to indulge in it; and his argument upon this subject is sufficiently curious to merit a moment's examination. In the first place, then, he tells his disciples that neither fornicators, nor adulterers, nor Sodomites, nor practisers of various other vices not of a sexual nature, will inherit the kingdom of God.[1] Fornication should not even be named among the Christians.[2] They must mortify their members upon earth, for impure connections and sexual license bring down the wrath of God.[3] They must exclude from their society any one who is guilty of such irregularities.[4] "The body is not for prostitution, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body." The bodies of Christians are the members of Christ: "Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of a prostitute? God forbid. What! do you not know that he who is joined to a prostitute is one body? for the two [he says[5]] shall be one flesh."[6] It was surely a very original notion of Paul's to extend to the casual connections formed

[1] 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10.—Eph. v. 5.
[2] Eph v. 3.
[3] Col. iii. 5, 6.
[4] 1 Cor. v. 9–11.
[5] φήσιν is doubtful.
[6] 1 Cor. vi. 13–16.

by temporary passion the solemn sanction bestowed upon the permanent union of man and wife. It is said in Genesis that a man and his wife are to be one flesh, and this is obviously an emphatic mode of expressing the closeness and binding character of the alliance into which they enter. But what may appropriately be said of married persons cannot of necessity be said of persons linked together only by the most fleeting and mercenary kind of ties. The very evil of prostitution is, that the prostitute and her companion are *not* one flesh in the allegorical sense in which husband and wife are so; and to condemn it on account of the presence of the very circumstance which is conspicuously absent, is to cut the ground from under our feet. But let us hear the apostle further. "But he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit. Flee prostitution. Every sin that a man commits is outside of the body [what can this mean?], but the fornicator sins against his own body. What! do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit in you? which you have of God, and you are not your own."[1] Now in this singular argument it is noticeable that the ground taken up is entirely theological. Destroy the theological foundation, and the ethical superstructure is involved in its ruin. Thus, if we do not believe that our bodies are the members of Christ, nor the temples of the Holy Spirit, Paul has no moral reason to give us against the most unlimited indulgence in prostitution. While, even if we admit his premises, it is not very easy to see how his conclusion follows. For why should we

[1] 1 Cor. vi. 17-19.

not make the members of Christ those of a prostitute, unless it be previously shown that it would in any case be wrong to do so with our own members? It would not (according to Paul himself) be wrong to make the members of Christ members of a wife; why, then, should it be wrong to make them members of any other woman whatever? Clearly this question could not be answered without an attempt to prove, on independent grounds, the evil of promiscuous indulgence of the sexual passion. But no such attempt is made by Paul. He has therefore failed completely to make out a case against even the most unbridled license. Not that his conclusion need therefore be rejected. On the contrary, the danger of his arguments is not that his view of morals is fundamentally erroneous, but that he rests an important precept upon a dangerously narrow basis.

Pass we now to that which he considers as the normal relation between the sexes. The subject may be divided into three heads: that of the formation of such relations, that of their character when formed, and that of their disruption. Upon all of these the apostle has advice to give.

In the first place it appears that the Corinthians had applied to him for a solution of some question that had been raised among them as to the propriety of entering at all into the matrimonial state. In answer to their inquiries he begins by informing them that it is good for a man not to touch a woman. He would prefer it if every one were like himself, unmarried. To unmarried people and widows he says that they had better remain as they are. Concerning virgins of either sex he delivers his private opinion that their

condition is a good one for the present necessity. A married man indeed should not endeavour to get rid of his wife; but neither should an unmarried man endeavour to obtain a wife. The time is so short till the final judgment of the world that it makes little difference; before long both married and unmarried will be in the same position. Meantime, however, celibacy is the preferable state; and that because celibates care for the things of the Lord, how they may please the Lord; but married people care for one another, and study to please one another.[1] Why Paul should suppose that married people, even while studying one another's happiness, might not also endeavour to please the Lord, it is hard to understand. He seems in this passage to lend his sanction to the very dangerous doctrine that a due discharge of the ordinary duties of life is incompatible with attention to the service of God. As if the highest type of Christian life were not precisely that in which both were combined in such a manner that neither should be sacrificed to the other. But, apart from this fundamental objection to his theory, it is liable to the remark that the assumptions on which it rests are untrue. Unmarried persons, unless the whole literature of fiction, dramatic and novelistic, utterly belies them, care at least as much to become married as married persons care to promote one another's comfort. Indeed, it would be no less true to nature to say, that the unmarried in general take more pains to please some persons of the opposite sex than husbands take to please their wives, or wives their husbands. Not to dwell upon the fact that courtship involves a greater effort, mental and

[1] 1 Cor. vii. 1–34.

physical, than the mere continuance of love assured of being returned, there is the obvious consideration that the mere outward circumstances of the unmarried are far less favourable than those of the married to the enjoyment of their mutual society without considerable sacrifice of time. Hence the estimate made by Paul of the relative advantages of the two states is untrue to facts, except in the rare cases of those who have firmly resolved upon a life of celibacy, and who, in addition to this, have so perfect a control over their passions, or so little passion at all, as to be untroubled by sexual imaginations.

That these objections are well founded might be proved by reference to a picture (drawn either by Paul himself or by some one who assumed his name) of the conduct of young widows. Having to consider the question what widows may properly be supported by the charity of the Church, this writer refuses to admit any of them to the number of pensioners until they are sixty years old, apparently on the ground that they cannot be trusted to give up flirting altogether before they have reached that age. Young widows are to be rejected, for when they have begun to wax wanton against Christ, they wish to marry; a damnable tendency, but one which it is so hopeless to get rid of, that the best thing they can do is to marry, to have children, and manage their households. Otherwise they will gad about gossiping and tale-bearing from house to house; not only idle, but mischievous.[1] So that the ideal conception of unmarried persons caring only to please the Lord had at least no application to Christian widows.

[1] 1 Tim. v. 9–15.

While recommending celibacy, Paul is careful not to encourage breach of promise of marriage. If a man thinks he is behaving unhandsomely towards his betrothed, who is passing the flower of her age, he may marry her: he is not doing wrong. Nevertheless if he feel no necessity for a sexual relation, and resolve to keep her a virgin, he does well. So then marriage is good, but celibacy is better.[1]

Notwithstanding these views, Paul, or at least the Pauline Christian who wrote the first Epistle to Timothy, by no means contemplates a celibate clergy. It is specially enumerated among the qualifications of a bishop that he is to be a good manager of his household, keeping his children well in order; for (it is argued) if a man cannot rule his own house, how will he be able to take care of the Church of God? The only limitation placed upon the bishops is that they are not to be polygamists. They, as well as the deacons, are to keep to a single wife.[2]

Notwithstanding his general preference for celibacy Paul recognises certain reasons as sufficing to excuse the establishment of a sexual relation, and it is important to note what, in the apostle's judgment, these reasons are. Now it is remarkable that he seems to perceive no consideration whatever in favour of the matrimonial condition but its ability to satisfy the sexual appetite. To avoid fornication a man is to have his own wife; if people cannot restrain themselves, they should marry, for it is better to marry than to burn. Those who marry are not guilty of sin, although they will have trouble in the flesh.[3] Such a view of the functions of matrimony as this is simply

[1] 1 Cor. vii. 36-38. [2] 1 Tim. iii. 1-5. [3] 1 Cor. vii. 2, 9, 28.

degrading. It treats it as exactly equivalent to prostitution in the uses it fulfils, and as differing only in the durability of the connection. But if the whole object of the connection is merely to gratify passion, its greater durability is but a questionable advantage. For exactly as marriage is recommended "to avoid fornication," so divorce might often be recommended to avoid adultery. A union of which the main purpose is to give a convenient outlet to desire, had better be broken when it ceases to fulfil that office to the satisfaction of both the parties. It is strange that Paul should seem to have no conception whatever of the intellectual or moral advantages to be derived from the sympathetic companionship of one of the opposite sex. Perhaps his age presented him with scarcely any examples of marriages in which that companionship was carried into the higher fields of human thought or action. Yet he might still have acknowledged something more in the emotion of love than a special condition of the human body. Christianity has done much to raise the character of marriage, but not one of its achievements in that respect can be credited to the writings of its chief apostle.

Such being the grounds on which the matrimonial bond was to be contracted, it was natural that when contracted, the relation of the parties to each other should not be one of a very exalted order. Paul has, in fact, little of moment to recommend under the second head (that of the character of these relations) except the subjection of women, and on this he is certainly emphatic enough. Wives are to submit themselves to their own husbands; husbands are

to love their wives.[1] An extraordinary reason is given in one epistle (possibly indeed not written by Paul) for requiring women to learn with subjection, and forbidding them to teach, or usurp authority over men. It is that Adam was formed first, and Eve after him, and that Adam was not deceived, but Eve was.[2] Scarcely less absurd than this is the argument (and again I must note that it occurs in an epistle of doubtful authenticity) that the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ is of the Church, and that just as the Church is subject to Christ, so must wives be subject to their husbands. And as Christ loved the Church, so are husbands to love their wives, considering them as equivalent to their own bodies, which they cannot hate[3] (although it did not appear that when a man became "one body" with a prostitute he was therefore to love her). These views of the duty of submission on the part of wives are not indeed surprising in that early age, for they have continued to the present day. The writer of these epistles is only chargeable with not being in advance of his fellow-men. It required all the genius of Plato, whom not even the greatest apostle could approach, to foreshadow for women a position of equality which they are but now beginning to attain.

Besides these rules there is another laid down by Paul for the conduct of married parties which evinces his strong common sense. Husbands and wives are mutually to render one another their "due."[4] They

[1] Col. iii. 18, 19.—Eph. v. 22, 25.

[2] 1 Tim. ii. 11–14.

[3] Eph. v. 22–33.

[4] I follow Lachmann in reading ὀφειλὴν instead of ὀφειλομένην εὔνοιαν, in vol. iii.

have not absolute power over their own bodies. They must not therefore defraud one another of conjugal rights, unless for a short time with a view to fasting and prayer, and then only with mutual consent.[1] Paul therefore would have given no sanction to that very questionable form of asceticism in which husbands deserted their wives, or wives their husbands, to pursue their own salvation, regardless of the happiness of their unfortunate consorts. All such persons he would have bidden to return to the more indisputable duties of the marriage-bed.

Such a doctrine, however, to make it properly applicable to practice, would require to be supplemented by a doctrine of divorce; otherwise there is no provision for the case of an invincible repugnance arising in one of the parties towards the other, or in both towards each other. And this brings me to the third head of the apostle's teaching; his views on the disruption of the marriage-tie. Here he has little to say except that the wife is not to quit her husband, or that, if she do, she must remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband; and that the husband is not to put away his wife. In cases where one is a Christian and the other not, they are not absolutely under bondage; they may separate, though it does not appear that they may marry again. But the apostle strongly advises them to keep together, in the hope that the believing member of the couple may save the other.[2] It is plain from this summary that the apostle, no more than his Master, faces the real difficulties of the question of divorce. For the case of unhappy unions, except in the single instance of the one party being a Christian, he has no provi-

[1] 1 Cor. vii. 3–5. [2] 1 Cor. vii. 10–16.

sion whatever. It is remarkable, however, that he several times intimates in the course of this chapter that he is not speaking with the authority of Christ, but simply expressing his personal opinions; a proviso which looks as if he himself were unwilling to invest these views with full force of the sanction they would otherwise have derived from his apostolical commission.

There is another subject on which the opinions expressed by Paul are open to considerable comment—the resurrection of the dead. In a chapter which for its beauty and its eloquence is unparalleled in the New Testament, he discusses the Christian prospect of another life. Had he confined himself to rhetoric, I should have been contented simply to admire, but he has unfortunately mingled argument with poetic vision in a very unsatisfactory manner. In the first place, he attempts to deduce the resurrection of the dead from the resurrection of Christ. If, he contends, there be no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen; our preaching is vain, and so also is your faith.[1] He fails to perceive that the resurrection of Christ—a man whose whole life, according to him, was full of prodigies—could be no guarantee for the resurrection of any other individual whatever. Christ had already been restored to life in a manner in which no other person had ever been restored. His body had been reanimated after two days, before it had had time to suffer decomposition, and that without the intervention of any other person, competent, like Christ himself, to perform a miracle. How then could so unprecedented an occurrence warrant the expectation of the

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 12–20.

reanimation of those who had long been dead, and whose bodies had suffered decomposition? Plainly there is here a palpable *non sequitur*. Christ might be raised without this fact involving a general resurrection; and a general resurrection might happen without Christ having been raised. Further on he makes a still more amazing blunder. Answering a supposed antagonist, who puts the natural question, "With what body are the dead raised?" he exclaims, "Fool! that which thou sowest is not quickened except it die;"[1] implying that he conceived the change undergone by seed dropped into the ground to resemble the death of the human body. Now it is needless to point out that the organic processes constituting physical life do not cease in the grain which (as he says) grows up into wheat or some other corn; and that if they did cease, that "body that shall be," which he compares to the bodies of men in their expected resurrection, never would appear at all. The grain, in short, would not grow. An adversary, had he been on the alert, might have retorted upon Paul (borrowing his own courteous phraseology): "Idiot! that which thou sowest is not quickened *if* it die." Such a retort would have been completely crushing. Another very fatal mistake of Paul's is the contention that if the dead do not rise, we have no reason to do anything but enjoy the passing hour. "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die."[2] Nothing can be more dangerous than such language as this; for if a man bases his moral system upon the belief in a future life, the destruction of that belief will involve the destruction

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 36. [2] 1 Cor. xv. 32.

of his moral system. It is founding the more certain upon the less so; universal conceptions upon special ones; that which is essential to human existence upon the doctrines of a particular creed held only by a portion of the human race. The argument is a favourite one with theologians, because it enlists in favour of the doctrine of a future state all the strong attachment by which we cling to principles of morals. None the less is it illegitimate, and ought it to be sternly rejected.

Next in beauty to this eloquent description of the future state of man may be reckoned the extremely fine chapter on brotherly love in the same epistle. Brotherly love, according to Paul, never fails, though intellectual gifts, such as prophecies, tongues, and knowledge, will pass away. Hope, faith, and brotherly love are joined together by him as a trinity of virtues which "now abide;" but the greatest of these is brotherly love.[1]

Scattered about in the writings of this apostle there are also some admirable maxims of conduct, extremely similar in tone to those of Jesus. Thus, he tells his fellow-Christians to be kindly affectioned one to another; to bless those that persecute them—to bless and not to curse; to return no man evil for evil; give food to a hungry enemy and drink to a thirsty one; and generally, not to be overcome by evil, but to overcome evil by good.[2] It were much to be wished that he himself had remembered these beneficent rules of conduct in the case of Alexander the coppersmith, who he says did him "much evil," and concerning whom he utters the significant prayer that the Lord may reward him according to his works.[3]

[1] 1 Cor. xiii. [2] Rom. xii. 10–21.—1 Thess. v. 15.
[3] 2 Tim. iv. 14.

SUBDIVISION 3.—*The Apocalypse.*

The author of the Apocalypse, or Book of Revelation, who professes to have seen the vision he describes at Patmos, gives himself the name of John; a circumstance which led in former times to the belief that the work was the composition of John the disciple of Jesus. It is a rather late production, having been written subsequently to the establishment by Paul of Gentile Christian communities in various parts of Asia. It also presupposes the existence of a sect of heretics termed Nicolaitanes, who had arisen in some places, and was therefore probably not written until some time after the foundation of these churches by the great apostle.

The author endeavours to add lustre to his work by proclaiming at its outset that it was committed to writing under the direct inspiration of Jesus Christ himself, who dictated it to him, or rather showed it to him, when he was "in the Spirit on the Lord's day." Notwithstanding this exalted authorship, it is a production of very inferior merits indeed. It is conceived in that style of overloaded allegory of which the art consists in concealing the thought of the writer under images decipherable only by an initiated few. The Book of Daniel is an example of the same kind of thing. A false interest is excited by this style from the mere difficulty of comprehending the meaning. How widely it differs from that mode of allegory which possess a real literary justification, may be shown by comparing the Apocalypse with the "Pilgrim's Progress." In Bunyan, the thought is

revealed under clear and transparent images; in John, it is concealed under obscure and turbid ones. Hence there have been endless interpretations of the Apocalypse; there has been only one of the "Pilgrim's Progress." That characteristic which Holy Writ has been shown to possess of calling forth a multitude of comments and speculations upon its meaning belongs in a pre-eminent degree to the Revelation of John.

After writing by the instructions of Christ a letter to each of the Seven Churches, the author proceeds to describe his vision. There was a throne in heaven, upon which God himself was seated. He had the singular appearance of a jasper and a sardine stone. Beasts, elders, angels, saints, and a promiscuous company besides were around the throne, engaged in performing the ceremonies of the celestial court. Various works were executed according to orders by the attendant angels. A beast then arises out of the sea, and is worshipped by those whose names are not in Christ's book. "Babylon the Great," under the form of a harlot, is judged and put an end to. An angel comes down from heaven and binds "that old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan," for a thousand years. During this millennium Christ reigns on earth, and all who have been martyrs for his sake, or have not worshipped the beast, rise from the dead to reign with him. After the thousand years are over Satan is unfortunately released from prison, and does a great deal of mischief, but is ultimately recaptured again and cast into a lake of fire and brimstone. A second resurrection, for the unprivileged multitude, now takes place. All the dead stand before God, and are judged

by reference to the records which have been carefully kept in heaven in books provided for the purpose. All who are not in the book of life are thrown into the lake of fire, to which death and hell are consigned also. The inspired seer is now shown a new heaven, a new earth, and a new Jerusalem which comes down from heaven. For a moment he rises from the extremely commonplace level upon which he usually moves to an eloquent picture of that happier world in which "God shall wipe away all tears from" the eyes of men; when "there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain." The book concludes with a curse upon any one who shall in any manner tamper with it, either by way of addition or erasure, and with a promise from Jesus that he will come quickly.

SUBDIVISION 4.—*The God of Christendom.*

Although the God whom Jesus thought himself commissioned to represent, and in whom his disciples believed, is the historical continuation of the Jehovah of Hebrew Scripture, yet his character is in many important aspects widely different. No longer the arbitrary and irascible personage who continually interfered with the current of human affairs, rewarding here, punishing there; now overthrowing a monarch, now destroying a nation; he exercises a calmer and more equitable sway over the destinies of the world. As the servile occupants of the bench in former days too often combined the functions of prosecutors with those of judges, so Jehovah in the ancient times of Israel had sometimes thrown off the judicial dignity

to act with all the *animus* of a party to the cause. This was natural perhaps where the subject-matter of the inquiry was the worship and honour to be paid to himself. It was natural that he should take a strong personal interest in such cases; but as all opposition (among the Jews at least) had passed away, and he remained in exclusive possession of the throne, he could afford to treat the charges with which he had now to deal—mere infractions of morality, for example—in a much more impartial spirit.

In addition to this cause of transformation, the natural growth of religious feeling had tended to replace the older deity by a modified conception, and Jesus, falling in in this respect with the course of thought already in progress, contributed to effect a still further modification in the same direction. Hence, although there is nowhere an absolute break between the old and the new conceptions, the God of the New Testament is practically a very different person from the God of the Old. We cannot conceive him doing the same things. The worst action, in the way of interference in mundane matters, of which the God of the New Testament is guilty, is, perhaps, the sudden slaughter of Ananias and Sapphira. But what is this to such enormities as the deluge, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, or the commission of bears to devour little children who had ridiculed the baldness of a prophet? Horrors like these, so consistent with the general mode of procedure of the ancient Jehovah, are wholly incompatible with the characteristics so often ascribed to the more recent God. According to the theories of the New Testament, the crime committed by the Jews in

executing Jesus was at least as great as the crimes for which the antediluvians and the Sodomites had been so ruthlessly exterminated. Yet we cannot imagine Jesus as even wishing for the extermination of his contemporaries by water or by fire. The God whose love for mankind he had been teaching could not for a moment be thought of as consenting to such a course. While Elijah the Tishbite is represented as positively praying for the instant death of one hundred men who came to him with a message from his king, Jesus, on the contrary, is depicted as actually healing the only one of his enemies who had been in any way injured in effecting his arrest. Plainly when the conduct of the prophets is thus dissimilar, the deity whom they represent on earth is dissimilar also.

Another very marked alteration to be observed in passing from the character of Jehovah to that of God, is the emancipation of the object of worship from the limits of race. Jehovah was altogether a Jew. He kept the Sabbath-day; he loved fasts and festivals; he believed strongly in the virtue of circumcision; he was interested not so much in the general wellbeing of the human species, as in the success of the single people of whom he was the true leader in battle and the ultimate sovereign at home. What happened to all the remainder of mankind was to him a matter of trivial moment, although it might suit him occasionally to use them as instruments either for the chastisement or the restoration to favour of his beloved Israël. But God in the New Testament has largely cast off the special features of his race, and although he sometimes betrays his Judaic origin, he

is in the main cosmopolite in his sympathies and impartial in his behaviour. Though by no means catholic in religion, but holding exclusively to a single faith, he receives all who embrace that faith, of whatever nation, within the range of his favour. This great and deeply important change, though begun by Jesus, was in the main the work of Paul. If it was Jesus who constructed the tabernacle, it was Paul who built the temple.

While, however, there is an enormous improvement if we compare the administration of human affairs by Jehovah and by God, there is nevertheless a blot upon the character of God which suffices, if rigorously balanced against the failings of Jehovah, to outweigh them all. It is the eternity of the punishment which he inflicts in a future life. No amount of sophistry can ever justify the creation of beings whose lives are to terminate in endless suffering. But while the *reality* of condemnation to such endless suffering would be a far more gigantic crime than any of the merely terrestrial penalties inflicted by the Hebrew Jehovah, the *belief* in such endless suffering is quite consistent with a much higher general conception of the divinity than the one that coëxisted with the belief in those terrestrial penalties. The explanation of this apparent paradox is to be found in the fact that the necessary injustice of eternal punishment is not very easily perceived; that, in fact, it is not understood at all in the ruder stages of social evolution, and not by every individual even in so advanced a society as our own. Some degree of punishment for offences is felt to be requisite; and it is not observed without considerable reflection that that punishment

in order to be just must needs be finite; must needs, if imposed by absolute power, aim at the ultimate reformation of the criminal, not at his ultimate misery. And it takes a far higher degree of mental cultivation to feel this than it takes to feel the injustice of the violent outbursts attributed in the Old Testament to Jehovah. Tradition and custom alone could have prevented Jesus and his disciples from feeling shocked at these; while it was intellectual capacity which was needed to enable them to reject eternal punishment as incompatible with justice. Add to these considerations the very important fact that the conduct conducing to salvation, and avoiding condemnation in the future state, was supposed to be known to all men beforehand, being fixed by unalterable rules; while the conduct necessary to ensure the terrestrial rewards, and escape the terrestrial penalties of the Old Testament, was not known till the occasion arose; sometimes not till after it had arisen. Thus, Jesus lays down in his teaching both the rules to be observed by human beings if they would obtain the approbation of his Father, and the exact manner in which the violation of those rules will be visited upon them if they fail to repent and obtain forgiveness. But Jehovah only made his rules from time to time, and never announced beforehand what his punishments would be. Who, for instance, could tell what he would do to the Israelites for worshipping the golden calf? who could say whether he would treat gathering sticks on the Sabbath, as to which there was as yet no law, as a capital crime? still more, who could imagine that he would visit the action of a monarch in taking a census of Israel by a

pestilence inflicted on the unoffending people? Plainly it was a very rude notion of deity indeed which was satisfied to suppose an arbitrary interposition in all such cases. The God of the New Testament may be more cruel, but he is also more consistent. If I may venture on a homely comparison, I should say that the Jehovah of the Israelites is like a capricious oriental despot, whose subjects' lives are in his hand, while the God of Christendom rather resembles a judge administering a Draconian code in which there should be no gradations between capital punishment and entire acquittal. The laws may in fact demand more bloodshed than the tyrant; but their existence and administration by fixed rules would undoubtedly imply that a people had reached a higher grade of civilisation. Moreover, exactly as government conducted by laws is capable of improvement by modification of the legislative enactments, while despotic government is essentially vicious, so the character of God admits of easy adaptation to the needs of a more cultivated state, while that of Jehovah can by no possibility be rendered consistent with a high ideal of divinity.

Such adaptation of the Christian God has actually taken place to a very large extent. The doctrine of Purgatory, leaving only the most incorrigible offenders to be consigned to hell, was already a considerable step in advance of the teaching of the New Testament. It got rid of the fundamental weakness in the conception of Jesus, wherein there was no proportion of punishment to offence; every sin, small or great, was either absolutely forgiven or punished to the uttermost extent. It effected the same beneficent change

as Romilly effected in the English law. Precisely as our former code punished even trifling crimes with death or not at all, so the God of Jesus punished sin either eternally or not at all. Precisely as the excessive severity of English law led to the entire acquittal of many criminals who should have received some degree of punishment, so the excessive severity of God led to the belief and hope that many sinners would be entirely pardoned who should in justice have received some measure of correction. Thus, in both these cases, the undue harshness of the threatened penalty tended to defeat the very object in view.

But the character of the God of Christendom admits of a much more thorough reformation than that effected by the Catholic Church. Tender spirits, offended, like Uncle Toby, at the notion that even the worst of beings should be damned to all eternity, have simply refused to accept the notion of endless torture. Thinkers, aiming at a system of abstract justice, have sought to prove that it could not be. Theologians have contrived all sorts of shifts to dispense with the necessity of believing it. Modern feeling, whether on grounds of logic or of sentiment, has gradually come to suppress it more and more as an inconvenient article in the nominal creed, to be, if not consciously rejected, at least, instinctively thrust as much as possible out of sight. There has resulted an idea of the Deity in which the harsher elements are swept away, and the gentler ones, such as his fatherhood, his care, and his love, are left behind. Such writers as Theodore Parker, Francis W. Newman, and Frances Power Cobbe, have carried this ideal to the highest point of perfection of which it appears to be capable.

Their God is still the God of Christendom, but refined, purified and exalted. The work which the Jewish prophets began, which Jesus carried on, at which all the nations of Christendom have laboured, they have most worthily completed. Whether the ideal thus attained is destined to be final, whether it really represents the ultimate possibilities of religious thought that can remain as the corner-stone of a universal faith, are questions that can be answered only when we have undertaken the complete analysis of those most general constituents of all theological systems which the foregoing examination has disclosed. On that last analysis we are about to enter.

BOOK II.

THE RELIGIOUS SENTIMENT ITSELF.

"Ach, mein Kindchen, schon als Knabe,
Als ich sass auf Mutters Schoss,
Glaubte ich an Gott den Vater,
Der da waltet gut und gross.

"Der die schöne Erd' erschaffen,
Und die schönen Menschen d'rauf,
Der den Sonnen, Monden, Sternen,
Vorgezeichnet ihren Lauf.

"Als ich grösser wurde, Kindchen,
Noch vielmehr begriff ich schon,
Und begriff, und ward vernünftig,
Und ich glaub' auch an den Sohn;

"An den lieben Sohn, der liebend
Uns die Liebe offenbart,
Und zum Lohne, wie gebräuchlich,
Von dem Volk gekreuzigt ward.

"Jetzo, da ich ausgewachsen,
Viel gelesen, viel gereist,
Schwillt mein Herz, und ganz von Herzen
Glaub, ich an den heil'gen Geist."

—HEINE.

THE

RELIGIOUS SENTIMENT ITSELF.

CHAPTER I.

THE ULTIMATE ELEMENTS.

We have now examined and classified the various phenomena manifested by the religious sentiment throughout the world. We have found those phenomena to have been in all ages of history, and to be now among all races of men, fundamentally alike. Diverse as the several creeds existing on the face of the earth appear to a superficial observer, yet the rites, the practices, the dogmas they contain, admit of being ranged under certain definite categories and deduced from certain invariable assumptions. The two leading ideas of consecration and of sanctity pervade them all, and while the mode of consecration, the objects consecrated, the things, places, men, or books regarded as sacred, differ in every quarter of the globe, the feelings of the religious man remain the same.

Let us take a rapid survey, before proceeding

further, of the ground we have already traversed. Wherever any religion exists at all we have found consecrated *actions;* that is, actions devoted to the service of God. Such actions, it is assumed, have some kind of validity or force, either in bringing from the deities addressed by the worshipper some species of temporal blessing, or in ensuring happiness in a future state, or in improving his moral character in this. Secondly, we no sooner rise above the very rudest forms of religion, than we find *places* set apart for worship, and entirely abstracted from all profaner uses. Thirdly, we find that it is a universal practice to dedicate certain *objects* to the special use of the divine beings received in the country; such objects being various in their nature, but very frequently consisting of gifts to the accredited ministers of the God for whom they are intended. Fourthly, we find in all the greater religions—the Confucian possibly excepted—a number of *persons* who have devoted themselves to a mode of life supposed to be especially pleasing to God, and carrying with it in their minds the notion of superior sanctity. Lastly, we have in almost every form of faith a special *class,* generally of male persons only, who are set apart, by some distinctive rite, to the performance of the consecrated actions required by the community to be done on their behalf; these actions thus acquiring a double consecration, derived primarily from their own nature, and secondarily from the character of those by whom they are performed.

Passing to the second of our main divisions, we found the conception of sanctity applied generally

where that of consecration had been applied, the distinction being that while the latter was imparted by man, the former was the gift of God. Thus, in the first place, just as human beings consecrate some of their actions to the service of God, so he, in his turn, sanctifies certain *events* to the enlightenment of mankind. It is the same in the second case, that of *places;* for here the deity sometimes points out a holy spot by some special mark of his presence, sometimes (and more commonly) condescends to sanctify those which man has devoted to his worship. And, thirdly, as men set apart some of their property for him, so he imparts to some of the *objects* in their possession a holy character, which endows them with peculiar powers, either over external nature, or over the mind and conscience of those who see, touch, or otherwise use them. Fourthly, he endows the *class* who perform the ceremonies of religion with his peculiar grace; a grace commonly evinced in their power to consecrate places, things, and men, to forgive sins, to convey the apostolic succession, to administer sacraments, and so forth; but occasionally manifested in the shape of supernatural endowments. And fifthly, as there are many of both sexes who give themselves to him, so there have been a few *men* to whom he may be said to have given himself, having invested them with authority to teach infallible truth, and found religions called after their names. Sixthly, he has revealed himself in a way to which there is nothing corresponding on the human side, by means of *books* composed by authors whom he inspired with the words he desired them to write.

Viewed in the gross, as we have viewed them now, these several manifestations of religious feeling cancel one another. That feeling has indeed expressed itself in the same general manner, but with differences in detail which render all its expressions equally unimportant in the eyes of science. For, to take the simplest instance, nothing can be said by a Christian, on behalf of the inspiration of his Scriptures, which might not be said by the Buddhist, the Confucian, or the Mussulman on behalf of the inspiration of theirs. If his appear to him more beautiful, more perfect, more sublime, so do theirs to them; and even if we concede his claims, the difference is one of degree, and not of kind. So it is in reference to miracles. Christianity can point to no miracles tending to establish its truth, which may not be matched by others tending to establish the truth of rival creeds. And if we find believers of every kind in every clime, attaching the most profound importance to the exact performance of religious rites in certain exact ways, while, nevertheless, those ways differ from age to age and from place to place, we cannot but conclude that every form of worship is equally good and equally indifferent; and that the faith of the Christian who drinks the blood of Christ on the banks of the Thames, stands on the same intellectual level with that of the Brahman who quaffs the juice of the Soma on the banks of the Ganges.

But this line of argument seems to tend to nothing short of the absolute annihilation of religion. Under the touch of a comparative anatomy of creeds, all that was imposing and magnificent in the edifice of theology crumbles into dust. Sys-

tems of thought piled up with elaborate care, philosophies evolved by centuries of toilsome preparation, fall into shapeless ruins at our feet. And all this by the simple process of putting them side by side.

Can we, however, rest content in the assumption that so vast a superstructure as that of religion has no solid foundation in the mind of man? And is it destined, like the theologies it has evolved in the course of its existence, to disappear entirely from a world enlightened by scientific knowledge?

Two questions must be carefully distinguished from one another in replying to the doubt thus suggested. The first is whether religion, although it may contain no objective truth, or no objective truth ascertainable by us, nevertheless possesses, from some circumstance in its own nature, or in the nature of the world we live in, a hold upon the human race, of which it cannot by any advance of knowledge be deprived. Is there, in short, if not an everlasting truth, yet an everlasting dream from which there is to be no awakening, and in which spectral shapes do duty for external realities? An affirmative reply would admit the existence of religious sentiment to be a necessary result of the constitution of the human mind, but would not concede the inference that conclusions reached by means of that sentiment had any objective validity, or any intellectual worth beyond that which they derive from the imagination of those who believe them. The second question is whether there are in the fundamental composition of religious sentiment any elements not only necessary, but true; and if so,

what those elements are, and what is the proof of their credibility, if proof there be.

As a preliminary to answering either of these questions, it is needful to ascertain whether in the midst of the variety we have passed in review, there is any fundamental unity; in other words, whether the varied *forms* of religion are all we can ever know of it, or whether underlying those forms there is a permanent *structure* upon which they are superposed. For only when we know whether there is in all the creeds of the world a common element, can we proceed to inquire whether there is an element which is a necessary result of the constitution of our minds. If the phenomena evinced by the several religions to which we have referred in the previous book have no common source in human nature; if, while they differ in every article of their theology, there is nothing beyond theology in which they agree; then religion is a mere superficial product of circumstances, having no more solid guarantee than the authority of the particular teachers of each special variety. There is in fact no religion; there are only religions. There is no universal Faith; there is only particular Belief.

These, then, are the queries to which our attention must be addressed:—

1. Are there in the several religions of mankind any common elements?

2. If so, are those common elements a necessary, and therefore permanent, portion of our mental furniture?

3. If so, are those elements the correlatives of any actual truths, or not?

It may have been observed that all the phenomena we have examined in the previous Book imply one assumption, and cannot be understood without that assumption. All of them imply some kind of power or powers either behind, beyond, or external to the material world and the human beings who inhabit it, or at least involved in and manifested through that world and its inhabitants; some power whose nature is not clear to us, but whose effects are perceptible to our senses; some power to which we ourselves and the material world are equally subject. Sometimes indeed the power which religion thus assumes is broken up into several minor forces, and instead of a single deity we have several deities controlling the operations of nature. But, without dwelling now upon the fact that polytheistic creeds often look above the lesser beings whom they commonly put forward to a more mysterious and greater God, it may be observed that these minor forces are no more than forms of the one great force from which they are parted off by an imaginative subdivision. To place the ocean under one divinity, the winds under another, and the sun under a third, is practically a mental process of the same kind as to place them all under a single divinity; and the existence of some such cause of material phenomena being granted, it is a mere question of less or greater representative capacity whether we range them under numerous chiefs or comprehend them all under one. In either case we assume extra-mundane and superhuman power, and this is the essential assumption of all religion. The least assumption a religion can make is that of a single such power, and this (or more than this) it

always must assume. For without this we should remain within the boundaries of science; we should examine and classify phenomena, but we could never pass beyond the phenomena themselves to their mysterious origin or their hidden cause.

But this is not the only assumption involved in every possible religion. Every religion assumes also that there is in human nature something equally hyperphysical with the power which it worships, whether we call this something soul, or mind, or spirit. And between this human essence and the divine power there is held to be a singular correspondence, their relationship finding its concrete expression in religious worship on the one side and theological dogma on the other. All the practices and all the doctrines of every positive religion are but the modes in which men have sought to give body to their idea of this relationship.

We have then, strictly speaking, three fundamental postulates involved in the religious idea:—

First, that of a hyperphysical power in the universe.

Secondly, that of a hyperphysical entity in man.

Thirdly, that of a relation between the two.

The power assumed in the first postulate we may term the objective element in religion; the entity assumed in the second postulate we may term the subjective element. In the following chapter we shall deal with the objective element in the religious idea

CHAPTER II.

THE OBJECTIVE ELEMENT.

THE general result which has thus been reached by the decomposition of religion into its ultimate constituents must now be rendered somewhat more specific by illustrative examples tending to explain the character of the power the idea of whose existence forms the foundation of the religious sentiment, and such examples will tend to throw light upon the question whether the admission of such a power is or is not a necessity of thought. For the proof of necessity is twofold; *à posteriori* and *à priori*. We may show by the first mode that certain assumptions are always made under certain conditions as a matter of fact; not that they are always made by every human being, but that given the appropriate grade of culture, the beliefs in question arise. And we may show by the second that no effort of ours is able to separate certain ideas which have become associated in our minds; that the association persists under every strain we can put upon it, and that the resulting belief is therefore a necessary part of the constitution of the mind. Both modes of proof must be attempted here.

Now, in the first place, it must be remarked that few, if any, of the nations of the world are wholly destitute of some religious creed; and that those

which have been supposed, rightly or wrongly, to be without it, have generally been savage tribes of the lowest grade of culture. So slender is the evidence of the presence of a people without some theological conception that it may be doubted whether the travellers who have reported such facts have not been misled, either by inability to comprehend the language, or unfamiliarity with the order of thought, of those with whom they conversed.

Sometimes the absence of religion seems to be predicated of a people which does not present an example of the kind of belief which the European observer has been accustomed to consider as religious. An instance of this is afforded in Angas' account of "Savage Life in Australia." Of the Australians he states that "they appear to have no religious observances whatever. They acknowledge no Supreme Being, worship no idols, and believe only in the existence of a spirit whom they consider as the author of ill, and regard with superstitious dread." So that in the very act of denying a religion to these people he practically ascribes one to them. They, like Christians, appear to acknowledge a powerful spirit; and if they dwell upon the evil side of his works more than upon the good side, it is to be remembered that Christians too consider their deity "as the author of ill" by his action in cursing Adam with all his posterity; and that they too regard him "with superstitious dread" as a being who will send them to eternal torture if they fail to worship, to think, and to act as he enjoins them. Immediately after this, the author informs us that the Australians constantly carry firesticks at night, to repel malignant spirits,

and that they place great faith in sorcerers who profess to "counteract the influence of the spirits."[1] So that their destitution of "religious observances" is in like manner merely comparative.

Very little, if any, belief in deity appears to exist in Kamschatka. Steller, who has described the creed of its inhabitants, states that they believe in no providence, and hold that they have nothing to do with God, nor he with them.[2] Whether this amounts to a denial of his existence I cannot say. They have, however, another element of religion, belief in a future state, as will afterwards appear.

In primitive religions the abstract form of Deity is often filled up with the concrete figures of departed relatives. Indeed this is one of the modes in which that form acquires definiteness, becoming comprehensible to the savage mind from this limitation of its generality. Thus in Fiji, although a supreme God and various other gods exist, the ancestors appear to be the most popular objects of worship. Deceased relations of the Fijians (according to Seemann) take their places at once among the family gods.[3] Another author confirms this testimony. In Sandwich Island, in the Fijian group, he states that there are no idols. "The people worship the spirits of their ancestors."[4] In Savage Island again they pay their forefathers similar homage, and remark that they once had an image which they worshipped, but that they broke it in pieces during an epidemic which they ascribed to its influence.[5] Among the Kafirs the spirits of the dead are believed to possess considerable power for

[1] S. L. A., vol. i. p. 88. [2] Kamschatka, p. 269. [3] Viti, p. 389-391.
[4] N. Y., p. 394. [5] Ib., p. 470.

good and evil; "they are elevated in fact to the rank of deities, and (except where the Great-Great is worshipped concurrently with them) they are the only objects of a Kafir's adoration."[1]

Similar evidence is given by Acosta in reference to Peru. In that country there existed a highly-developed and elaborated worship of the dead. The bodies of the Incas, or governors of Peru, were kept and worshipped. Regular ministers were devoted to their service. Living Incas had images of themselves constructed, termed brothers, to which, both during the lifetime of their original and after his death, as much honour was shown as to the Incas themselves. These images were carried in processions designed to obtain rain, and fair weather, and in time of war. They were also the objects of feasting and of sacrifices.[2] But the adoration of the dead was not of such exclusive importance in Peru as in some countries of inferior culture, and the most prominent positions in their system were occupied by the Sun and the soul of the world, Pachacamac, who was in fact their highest God.[3]

These last examples introduce us to the more general conception of deity which, in all religions but the very lowest, is found along with the belief in supernatural beings of an inferior class, and in some of them overshadows and expels it. The Peruvians, as just stated, assigned the first rank to him whom they conceived to have created and to animate the universe. The Fijians adored a supreme Being Degei or Tangaroa. Lastly, the "Great-Great," mentioned in the above quotation from Shooter, is a

[1] K. N., p. 161. [2] H. I., b. 5, ch. vi. [3] C. R., b. 2, ch. iii.

being who seems from the somewhat contradictory evidence of travellers to have been regarded as God by some of the Kafirs, but to have been wholly neglected by others. Thus, in a passage quoted from a work of Captain Gardiner's by Canon Callaway, we find a conversation of the writer's with a native, in which the latter denies all knowledge of deity whatever, and expresses a vague notion that the things in the world may "come of themselves." Of another tribe the same writer asserts that "they acknowledged, indeed, a traditionary account of a Supreme Being, whom they called Ookoolukoolu (literally the Great-Great), but knew nothing further respecting him, than that he originally issued from the reeds, created men and cattle, and taught them the use of the assagai." Canon Callaway is apparently of opinion that the word Unkulunkulu was not in use among the natives of South Africa in the sense of God until it was introduced by Captain Gardiner.[1] Considerable suspicion is thus thrown upon any statements in which this name is employed for the Creator. If, however, we may accept a statement of Shooter's, "the Kafirs of Natal have preserved the tradition of a Being whom they call the Great-Great and the First Appearer or Exister." According to this writer "he is represented as having made all things," but this tradition "is not universally known among the people." A chief who was asked about Unkulunkulu, the Great-Great, knew nothing about him, but one of his old men, when a child, "had been told by women stooping with age that there was a great being above." There is also "a tribe in Natal

[1] R. S. A., vol. i. pp. 54, 55.

which still worships the Great-Great, though its recollection of him is very dim." This tribe calls upon Unkulunkulu in the act of sacrifice and in sickness.[1] While this testimony leaves it doubtful whether Unkulunkulu is worshipped at all, except by this single tribe, the traditions collected by Canon Callaway in the first volume of his valuable work point to the presence of a well-marked legend of creation in which that deity figures as the originator of human life. True, he is also spoken of as the first man, and in this fact we have the probable reconciliation of the view which treats him as the Supreme Being, with that which denies that his name was used with this signification. Unkulunkulu was the primæval ancestor of mankind, but he was also the Creator. Ancestor-worship finds its culmination in him. But he has been much neglected in comparison with minor deities, and the word Unkulunkulu has been applied to the ancestor of special tribes instead of to the ancestor of all mankind.

The general result seems to be that some, though not all of the Zulus, have in their minds a more or less definite idea of a First Cause of existence, but that this First Cause is not worshipped and is but little spoken of. Thus, an old woman questioned by an emissary of Canon Callaway's related this :—

"When we spoke of the origin of corn, asking, 'Whence came this?' the old people said, 'It came from the Creator who created all things. But we do not know him.' When we asked continually, 'Where is the Creator? for our chiefs we see?' the old men denied, saying, 'And those chiefs too whom we see,

[1] K. N., pp. 159, 160.

they were created by the Creator.' And when we asked, 'Where is he? for he is not visible at all. Where is he then?' we heard our fathers pointing towards heaven and saying, 'The Creator of all things is in heaven. And there is a nation of people there too.'"[1]

But while Unkulunkulu is generally considered as the Creator by the Zulus, it would appear that a neighbouring people, called the Amakxosa, had heard of a "lord in heaven" even greater than him, whom they called Utikxo. According to the evidence of an old native the word Utikxo is not of foreign origin. Utikxo was appealed to when a man sneezed, and "as regards the use of Utikxo, we used to say it when it thundered, and we thus knew that there is a power which is in heaven; and at length we adopted the custom of saying, Utikxo is he who is above all. But it was not said that he was in a certain place in heaven; it was said he filled the whole heaven. No distinction of place was made."[2] In the opinion of this authority, Utikxo had been in a manner superseded by Unkulunkulu, who, because he was visible while the original power was invisible, was mistaken for the Creator and for God.[3]

Testimony of a similar nature is given in regard to other regions of Africa. In Juda it is stated that the most intellectual of the great men had a confused idea of the existence and unity of a God.[4] Oldendorp states broadly that "all negro peoples believe that there is a God, whom they represent to themselves as very powerful and beneficent." He adds that

[1] R. S. A., vol. i. p. 52.
[2] Ib., vol. i. p. 65.
[3] Ib., vol. i. p. 67.
[4] V. G., vol. ii. p. 160.

among all the black nations he has known, there is none that has not this belief in God and that does not regard him as the author of the world. They call him by the same name as heaven, and it is even doubtful whether they do not take heaven for the supreme Being. "But perhaps," he adds, "they do not even think so definitely."[1] So that the conception of the Highest God in the regions visited by this missionary is still vague and indefinite, like that we have found in Juda and in Natal.

If now we turn to another quarter of the globe we find the peculiarly degraded and ignorant Greenlanders asserting that, although they knew nothing of God before the arrival of the missionaries, yet that those of them who had reflected on the subject had perceived the necessity of creative power, and had inferred that there must be a being far superior to the cleverest man. They had, in fact, used the argument from design, and thus prepared, they had gladly believed in the God preached by the missionaries, for they found that it was he whom they had in their hearts desired to know.[2] A similar conviction of the existence of a supreme God prevailed in the new world when it was discovered by Europeans. Such a God was acknowledged in Mexico and Peru, as also in the less civilised regions of the North. Speaking of the American Indians, Charlevoix observes that nothing is more certain, yet nothing more obscure, than the idea which these savages have of a primæval Being. All agree in regarding him as the first Spirit, the Ruler and the Creator of the world; but when further pressed, they have

[1] G. d. M., p. 318. [2] H. G., p. 240.

nothing to offer but grotesque fancies, ill-considered fables, and undigested systems. Nearly all the Algonquin nations (he adds) call the first Spirit the Great Hare; some term him Michabou and others Atahocan. He was apparently supposed by some to have been a kind of quadruped, and to have created the earth from a grain of sand drawn from the bottom of the ocean, and men from the dead bodies of animals.[1]

The great religions of the world have all of them (Buddhism alone excepted) acknowledged a God, whom they pictured to their minds in various ways according to the degree of their development and their powers of abstract thought. Dimly shadowed forth in the Confucian system under the title of Heaven, plainly acknowledged, yet mystically described by the Hindoos under many titles, whereof Brahma is one of the most usual, celebrated in plainer language by the classical heathens as Zeus or Jupiter, this great being appears in the three kindred creeds of Judaism, Islam, and Christianity, as Jehovah, as Allah, and as God. In Buddhism, however, there is no article of faith corresponding to the belief in God. The Buddha is himself the most exalted being in the universe, and he is neither almighty nor eternal. The creation of matter as also of man appears to be unaccounted for. There is no single being who can be regarded as the ruler of all things, and the highest object of Buddhist worship. But it must not be supposed that Buddhism has escaped the universal necessity of admitting spiritual powers superior to human beings. In the first

[1] N. F., vol. iii. p. 343.

place it retained the Indian deities, such as Brahma, Indra, and others, and though, subordinating all of them to Buddha, yet left them in possession of enormous capacities. In the second place, the Buddha in fact, though not in name, assumed the rank of a God. Practically, he is far more than human. He himself determines the place, time, and manner of his incarnation. He delivers infallible doctrine. He becomes an object of adoration, receiving divine honours from his followers. And although the reigning Buddha (having entered Nirvana) is non-existent, and cannot aid his disciples, the future Buddha, or Boddhisattva, can do so, and he is addressed in prayer for the same purposes for which a Christian would invoke the intercession of his Saviour. Thirdly, it is to be remarked that Buddhism, free from the single idea of God, is not free from the multitudinous idea of supernatural essences. Its theology, so to speak, is quite full of celestial beings of various ranks and functions, who swarm around the terrestrial believers and perform all kinds of wonders. To these remarks it may be added that in Nepaul, one of the countries where Buddhism prevails, the non-theistic form has been superseded by a theistic form, in which there are divine Buddhas corresponding to the human Buddhas; the highest of these, Adi-Buddha, being equivalent to the highest God of other creeds. And it is at least noteworthy, that in Ceylon, where the non-theistic form prevails in all its purity, the people have a habit of invoking demons to their aid, and of employing the priests of these demons, in all the more important emergencies of their domestic lives.

It must not be imagined, however, that I wish to undervalue the importance of the exception which Buddhism presents to the general rule. Far from it. It ought, in my opinion, to be always borne in mind as a refutation of the statement that belief in a personal God is a necessary element of all religion. Europeans are apt to carry with them throughout the world their clear-cut notions of deity as a powerful being who created the world, put man into it, governs it in a certain manner, and assigns punishments and rewards to the souls of men in a future state. This belief appears to them so necessary and so natural that they expect to find it universally prevailing, and regard it as the indispensable foundation on which all religion must be built. Buddhism, however, the creed which, after Christianity, has probably exerted the greatest and most widespread influence on human affairs, knows no such article of faith; and our general ideas of the universal constituents of religion must needs be modified to embrace this fact.

Some superhuman power must, however, be recognised in every religion, and it is the manner in which this superhuman power is described, the qualities ascribed to it, its unity or plurality, its relation towards man, and similar distinctions, which serve to differentiate one form of religion from another. The degree of definiteness is one of the most important features in this differentiation. Generally speaking, the definiteness of this idea and the development of the religion vary inversely as one another. This law, however, is obscured by the continual tendency to put forward, to worship, and to speak about in

ordinary cases, some inferior deity or deities, while there is lurking behind the vague idea of a higher entity who is seldom mentioned, little or never worshipped, and who possibly has no name in the language. So that the gods or idols who are worshipped by the people must not be taken as embodying the best expression of their religious thoughts. Some instances of the occurrence of this phenomenon will serve as illustrations of the foregoing statement.

On the coast of Guinea the people "have a faint idea of the true God, and ascribe to him the attributes Almighty and Omnipresent; they believe he created the universe, and therefore vastly prefer him before their idol-gods; but yet they do not pray to him, or offer any sacrifices to him; for which they give the following reasons. God, they say, is too highly exalted above us and too great to condescend so much as to trouble himself, or think of mankind: wherefore he commits the government of the world to their idols."[1] The manner in which Utikxo, the highest god, is thrown into the shade by the more intelligible and human Unkulunkulu (as shown in a previous extract) is another example of the operation of this law. And it is especially noteworthy that the Amazulu have also a "lord of heaven," with attributes corresponding to those of Utikxo, for whom they have no name. Anonymity, or if not absolute anonymity, the absence of any name commonly employed in the popular language is, as we shall see, one of the most usual features of this most exalted Being. Other travellers give similar accounts of other regions of Africa.

[1] C. G., p. 348.

Winterbottom, who was especially acquainted with Sierra Leone and its neighbourhood, says that "the Africans all acknowledge a supreme Being, the creator of the universe; but they suppose him to be endowed with too much benevolence to do harm to mankind, and therefore think it unnecessary to offer him any homage."[1] Of Dahomey we learn from Winwood Reade (a writer not likely to be partial to theism, or to discover it where it does not exist), that the natives erect temples to snakes, but "have also the unknown, unseen God, whose name they seldom dare to mention."[2] In another country in Africa the same writer found that the natives worshipped numerous spirits, and believed also in an evil Genius and a good Spirit. The former they were in the habit of propitiating by religious service; but the latter "they do not deem it necessary to pray to in a regular way, because he will not harm them. The word by which they express this supreme Being answers exactly to our word God. Like the Jehovah of the Hebrews, like that word in masonry which is only known to masters and never pronounced but in a whisper and in full lodge, this word they seldom dare to speak; and they display uneasiness if it is uttered before them." The writer states that he only heard it on two occasions; once when his men cried it out in a dangerous storm, and once when having asked a slave the name for God, the man "raised his eyes, and pointing to heaven, said in a soft voice, *Njambi*."[3] Again, in a lecture on the Ashantees, Mr Reade informed his hearers that "the Oji people," although believing in a supreme Being, do not worship him; while they do worship

[1] S. L., vol. i. p. 222. [2] S. A., p. 49. [3] Ib., p. 250.

"a number of inferior gods or demons," to whom they believe the superior God, offended with mankind, has left the management of terrestrial affairs.

Strange to say, the peculiarity thus observed in the old world is precisely repeated in the new. Of the Mexicans it is stated that "they never offered sacrifices to" Tonacatecotle, who was "God, Lord, Creator, Governor of the Universe," and whom "they painted alone with a crown, as lord of all." As their explanation of this conduct "they said that he did not regard them. All the others to whom they sacrificed were men once on a time, or demons."[1] Concerning the Peruvians, Acosta tells us that they give their deity a name of great excellence, Pachacamac, or Pachayachacic (creator of heaven and earth), and Usapu (admirable). He remarks, however, with much surprise, that they had no proper (or perhaps general) name in their language for God. There was nothing in the language of Cuzco or Mexico answering to "Deus," and the Spaniards used their own word "Dios." Whence he concludes, somewhat hastily, that they had but a slight and superficial knowledge of God.[2]

In reference to Peru, however, we have still more trustworthy evidence from a member of the governing family, or Incas. From his statements it appears that the name applied to the Highest was pronounced only on rare occasions, and then with extremest reverence. This name was Pachacamac, a word signifying "he who animates the whole world," or the Universal Soul, as it would be termed in Indian philosophy. Like other creeds that of Peru had its secondary deity, the Sun, in whose honour sacrifices were offered and

[1] A. M., vol. vi. p. 107, plate 1. [2] H. I., b. 5, ch. iii.

festivals held, while no temples were erected, and no sacrifices offered to Pachacamac, although the Peruvians adored him in their hearts and looked upon him as the unknown God.[1]

Ancient religion presents similar facts. In his exhaustive work on Sabaeism, Chwolsohn observes that the fundamental idea of that form of faith was not, as is often supposed, astrolatry. To Shahrastani (the Arabian scholar), and many others who followed him, Sabaeism expressed the idea "that God is too sublime and too great to occupy himself with the immediate management of this world; that he has therefore transferred the government thereof to the gods, and retained only the most important affairs for himself; that further, man is too weak to be able to apply immediately to the Highest; that he must therefore address his prayers and sacrifices to the intermediate divinities, to whom the management of the world has been intrusted by the Highest." Further on, the author asks himself whether this conception was peculiar to the Harranian Sabaeans, and replies, "Certainly not. This fundamental idea is tolerably old, and in later times found admission to some extent even among the strictly monotheistic Jews. . . . In the heathen world this view was universally shared by the cultivated classes, at least in the first centuries of the Christian era."[2]

Indian theology teems with the conception of a sublime but unknowable deity far superior to the deities of popular adoration, who has no name and whose greatness cannot be adequately expressed in human language. Indian philosophy loses itself in a

[1] C. R., b. 2, ch. iii.

[2] Ssabismus, vol. i. p. 725.

sea of mystic terms when it endeavours to speak of this all-pervading and pre-eminent Being. Take, for example, the following from the Chhandogya Upanishad, one of the treatises appended to the Sama Veda. A father is instructing his son :—

"'Dissolve this salt in water, and appear before me to-morrow morning.' He did so. Unto him said (the father), 'My child, find out the salt that you put in that water last night.' The salt, having been dissolved, could not be made out. (Unto Swetaketu said his father), 'Child, do you taste a little from the top of that water.' (The child did so. After a while the father inquired), 'How tastes it?' 'It is saltish' (said Swetaketu)." The same result followed with water taken from the middle and the bottom. "'If so (throwing it away), wash your mouth and grieve not.' Verily he did so (and said to his father), 'The salt that I put in the water exists for ever; (though I perceive it not by my eyes it is felt by my tongue).' (Unto him) said (his father), 'Verily, such is the case with the Truth, my child. Though you perceive it not, it nevertheless pervades this (body). That particle which is the soul of all this is Truth; it is the Universal Soul. O Swetaketu, Thou art that.'"[1]

Similar notions of an all-pervading and infinite Being are found in the Bhagavat-Gita, a theological episode inserted in the great epical poem known as the Mahabharata. There Vishnu is not merely the ordinary god Vishnu of Indian theology; but the universe itself is expressed as an incarnation of that deity who is seen in everything and himself is every-

[1] Ch. Up., ch. vi. sec. 13, p. 113.

thing. "I am the soul, O Arjuna," thus he addresses his mortal pupil, "which exists in the heart of all beings, and I am the beginning and the middle and also the end of existing things."[1]

Again, Vishnu thus describes himself in language which, translated into ordinary prose, would serve to convey the idea embodied in Mr Herbert Spencer's Unknowable:—

"Know that that brilliance which enters the sun and illumines the whole earth, and which is in the moon, and in fire, is of me. And I enter the ground and support all living things by my vigour; and I nourish all herbs, becoming that moisture of which the peculiar property is taste. And becoming fire, I enter the body of the living, and being associated with their inspiration and expiration, cause food of the four kinds to digest. And I enter the heart of each one, and from me come memory, knowledge, and reason."[2]

Nor did the writers of the Veda and the commentaries thereupon omit to look above the concrete forms of the mythological gods who people their Pantheon to a more comprehensive and less comprehensible primordial Source. The gods were unfitted to serve as explanations of the origin of the universe by reason of the theory that they were not eternal, and that they came into existence subsequently to the creation of the world. The writer of a hymn in the tenth book of the Rig-Veda asserted that "the One, which in the beginning breathed calmly, self-sustained, is developed by . . . its own inherent heat, or by rigorous and intense abstraction." But this Rishi

[1] Bh. G., ch. x. p. 71. [2] Ib., ch. xv. p. 100.

avowed himself unable to say anything of creation, or even to know whether there was a creator. "Even its ruler in the highest heaven may not be in possession of the great secret." Explaining this passage, a commentator, writing at a much later date, observes that "the last verse of the hymn declares that the ruler of the universe knows, or that even he does not know, from what material cause this visible world arose, and whether that material cause exists in any definite form or not. That is to say, the declaration that 'he knows,' is made from the stand-point of that popular conception which distinguishes between the ruler of the universe and the creatures over whom he rules; while the proposition that 'he does not know' is asserted on the ground of that highest principle which, transcending all popular conceptions, affirms the identity of all things with the supreme Soul, which cannot see any other existence as distinct from itself."[1]

In this sentence the commentator correctly points out the distinction between the Unknown Cause of philosophic thought and the gods of popular theology, the latter being limited, and having the universe outside of and objective to them, the former comprehending it within itself, and having nothing objective whatever. And he perceives apparently that these are but different modes of conceiving the same Ultimate Essence, dependent on the varying representative capacities of those by whom they are employed.

In India, as elsewhere, this Ultimate Essence had no proper name. Sometimes it is spoken of as "That."

[1] O. S. T., vol. v. pp. 363, 364.

Thus, in a passage quoted by Dr Muir from the Taittirīya Brahmana we find the following: "This [universe] was not originally anything. There was neither heaven, nor earth, nor atmosphere. That being non-existent (asat) resolved 'Let me be.' That became fervent," and so forth. Hereupon the commentator states that "the Supreme Spirit was non-existent only in respect of name and form, but that nevertheless it was really existing (sat)."[1]

Professor Max Müller, in his essay on the Veda, has observed that after naming the several powers of nature, and worshipping them as gods, the ancient Hindu found that there was yet another power within him and around him for which he had no name. This he termed in the first instance "Brahman," force, will, wish. But when Brahman too had become a person, he called the mysterious and impersonal power "Âtman," originally meaning breath or spirit, subsequently Self. "Atman remained always free from myth and worship, differing in this from Brahman (neuter), who has his temples in India even now, and is worshipped as Brahman (masculine), together with Vishnu and Siva and other popular gods."[2] Distinguishing these two deities, for the convenience of English readers, as Brahm, the neuter, and Brahma, the masculine God, it is to be observed that even the latter, who holds in theology the function of Creator, is but little worshipped in India, and holds no conspicuous place in the popular mind. Thus Wilson says, "It is doubtful if Brahma was ever worshipped. Indications of local adoration of him at Pushkara, near Ajmir, are found in one Purana, the Brâhma

[1] O. S. T., vol. v. p. 366. [2] Chips, vol. i. pp. 70, 71.

Purana, but in no other part of India is there the slightest vestige of his worship."[1] Elsewhere the same most competent authority states "it might be difficult to meet with" any Brahma-worshippers now: "exclusive adorers of this deity, and temples dedicated to him, do not now occur perhaps in any part of India; at the same time it is an error to suppose that public homage is never paid to him." Hereupon he mentions a few places where Brahma is particularly reverenced. While, however, there may be discovered some faint traces of the worship of Brahma the Creator, and first member of the Hindu Trinity, there does not appear to be any worship whatever of the more impersonal and abstract Brahm. Brahm is related to Brahma much as the Absolute or the Unknowable of philosophy is related to the God of the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures. In the conception of Brahm the idea of deity is pushed to the utmost limits of which human thought is capable, and we have a being whose very exaltation above the mythological personages who pass for gods among the people precludes him from receiving the adoration of any but philosophic minds. When therefore Professor Max Müller speaks of temples dedicated to Brahm I presume that he is speaking of the temples of Brahma, the corporeal form of this unembodied idea. For Brahm is stated to be "immaterial, invisible, unborn, uncreated, without beginning or end;" to be "inapprehensible by the understanding, at least until that is freed from the film of mortal blindness;" to be devoid of attributes, or to have only purity, and to be "susceptible of no interest in the acts of man or the

[1] W. W., vol. ii. p. 63.

administration of the affairs of the universe." Conformably to these views, adds Wilson, "no temples are erected, no prayers are even addressed to the Supreme."[1] Thus Brahma, the God, is but little worshipped; Brahm, the infinite being, and âtman, spirit, are not worshipped at all. Now Brahma, the creative and formative power, corresponds to God the Father; while Brahm and âtman, especially the latter, bear more resemblance to the Holy Ghost; a fact to be especially noted in reference to the comparison hereafter to be made between the positions occupied by the more and the less spiritual members of the Christian Trinity.

Thus we have this singular neglect of the Supreme Divinity prevailing among ancient heathens, among modern Africans, among Hindus of all ages, and among pre-Christian Mexicans and Peruvians. Do Judaism, and its offshoot, Christianity, offer no sign of a similar relegation of the highest to an invisible background? I think they do. The evidence is not indeed quite so simple as in the other cases. But it is deserving of remark that the ordinary name for God in Hebrew, Elohim (אלהים), is plural, and must at one time have signified gods; while the word which is sometimes used alone, but more commonly in combination with it (יהוה), is regarded as so sacred that the Jews in reading the Scriptures never pronounce it, but substitute Adonai (אדני), my Lord, in its place. Owing to this ancient custom the very sound of the word יהוה has been absolutely forgotten, and Jehovah, by which we commonly render it, has been merely constructed by supplying the

[1] W. W., vol. ii. p. 91.

vowels from Adonai. Now the existence of a most holy name, but rarely used, and then only with great reverence, is a manifestation of religious feeling exactly corresponding to that related by Reade concerning the African name Njambi. Suppose that with the progress of theological dogmas and ecclesiastical usages the use of the word Njambi should be entirely dropped, its pronunciation might then be entirely lost (if, as in Hebrew, its vowel sounds were never written). And with the adoption of a monotheistic creed some name, now belonging to an idol, might be used as synonymous with Njambi. Now something of this kind may have happened with the Hebrews. There can be little doubt that the Elohim were originally gods accepted by the Hebrews as part of a polytheistic system. Deep in the minds of Hebrew thinkers lay the more abstract notion of a single God, more powerful and more mysterious than the Elohim. They called him Jahveh, or whatever else may have been the name expressed by יהוה. But as the monotheistic view triumphed over the polytheistic, the Elohim were adopted into the framework of the new religion, and in a manner subordinated to Jahveh by a process of fusion. The name of Jahveh, which must once have been in common use, was now treated as too holy to be ever uttered by mortal lips. The ancient God who had stood at the head of the system of his party, was in a certain sense withdrawn from active life, but retained as the nominal occupant of supreme authority. Whether this conjectural account is probable or not, must be left to better judges to decide, but it tends at least to bring the history of the Jewish faith into harmony with that of other religions.

Moreover, it is interesting to observe that a process extremely similar to that here imagined as occurring in the development of Judaism, was actually passed through by its younger rival. Christianity, arising in the midst of a people who had arrived at highly abstract views of deity, proceeded at once to do what so many other creeds have done, to embody the conception of divine power in a concrete object. This concrete object was in the Christian theology a man. And as generally happens in these cases, the more abstract idea was overshadowed and to some extent driven from the field by the more concrete. Christ occupies a larger place both in authorised Christian worship and in the popular Christian imagination than does his Father. The creed no doubt treats them both with equal reverence, as persons in a single God; but to understand what is truly felt and believed by the people, we must look not to the letter of their creeds, but to their actual, and above all their unconscious practice. Doing this we find first an entire absence of any special festival in honour of the Father.[1] Look at the large place occupied by the history of Jesus in ecclesiastical fastdays and feastdays. We have the Annunciation, the Nativity, the forty days of Lent, the Crucifixion, the Resurrection, the Ascension, all referring to him. But we have quite forgotten to celebrate the creation of the human species, the expulsion from Eden, the deluge, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, and other mighty works due to his Father. The weekly holiday, originally a memo-

[1] The remark is not mine, but is made by Didron, a devout Roman Catholic writer, to whom I am much indebted for this and other hints.—Ic. Ch., p. 572 n.

rial of his repose on the seventh day, has indeed been retained from Judaism; yet even here its reference has been changed from the history of the first person to that of the second by its transfer from the last day of the week to the first. But this is not all. Didron remarks that in early works of art Jesus is made to take the place of his Father in creation and in similar labours, just as in heathen religions an inferior divinity does the work under a superior one. Dishonourable and even ridiculous positions were assigned to God the Father. The more ancient artists were reluctant to paint the whole of the First Person, just as Africans, Peruvians and Hebrews were reluctant to speak his name. A mere hand or an arm is held sufficient to represent him. But in the 13th and 14th centuries, God the Father begins to manifest his figure; at first his bust only, and then his whole person. In the 14th century we take part in the birth and development of the figure of the eternal Father. At first equal to his Son in age and station, he begins in process of time to become slightly different, until, towards 1360, the notion of paternity is attached irrevocably to him; he is henceforth uniformly older than his Son, and assumes the first place in the Trinity. The middle age may be divided (according to Didron) into two periods. In the first, preceding the 14th century, we have the Father in the image and similitude of the Son. In the second, after the 13th century until the 16th, Jesus Christ loses his iconographic distinctness, and is conquered by his Father. He in his turn puts on the likeness of the Father, becoming old and wrinkled like him.[1] Basing his conclusions

[1] Ic. Ch., p. 148–203.

on these remarkable disclosures, Michelet, in his "History of France," observes with considerable reason that from the 1st century until the 12th God was not worshipped by Christians. Nay, even for fifteen centuries not a temple, not an altar was erected to him. And when he did venture to appear beside his Son in Christian art, he remained neglected and solitary. Nobody made an offering to him, or caused a mass to be said in his honour.[1]

But while the first Person of the Trinity has now obtained, especially in Protestant countries, a degree of recognition which he did not always enjoy, there remains behind another Person, who is more abstract, more spiritual, more undefinable than either the Father or the Son. Formally included in the liturgies of the Church, having an office established in his honour, churches dedicated to his name, this member of the Trinity has nevertheless been strangely neglected by all Christian nations. Nobody practically worships the Holy Ghost; nobody pays him especial attention; nobody appears to be much concerned about his proceedings. Artists have treated him with a degree of indifference which they have never manifested towards Jesus Christ. Not only have they sometimes forgotten to include the Holy Ghost in their representations of the Godhead, but they have omitted him even from a scene where he had the best possible claim to figure, namely, the reception of the Spirit by the apostles at the feast of Pentecost. Elsewhere they have not completely left him out, but have placed him in an attitude of subordination and indignity, evincing

[1] Michelet, "Histoire de France," vol. vii. p. xlix.

but scant respect, as where an artist has depicted an angel as apparently restraining the impetuosity of the dove by holding its tail in both his hands. While in the Catacombs it was the Father who was suppressed, in the Trinities of the 12th, 15th, and 16th centuries it is the Holy Ghost who is found to be missing. "Thus," observes the Roman Catholic author to whom I am indebted for these facts, "the Holy Ghost has sometimes had reason to complain of the artists."[1]

Were this Person, in fact, disposed to be punctilious, it is not only artists, mere reflectors of the general sentiment, but the whole Christian world of whom he would have reason to complain. So little does he occupy the ordinary thoughts of Christians, that Abailard gave the greatest offence by naming a monastery after him, and this procedure of the great theologian remains, I believe, a solitary example in ecclesiastical history of such an honour being paid to the Paraclete. Yet surely he who bears the great office of the Comforter is deserving of some more express recognition than he now receives! What is the cause of this universal oblivion? I suspect it is that which leads to the neglect by the Africans of their highest god, namely, his entire innocuousness. We saw that various tribes, while omitting to worship a benevolent deity, who will never do them any kind of harm, address their prayers to a class of gods who are described by travellers as demons, or evil spirits, but whom they no doubt regard as mixtures of good qualities with bad; capable of propitiation by prayer, but resentful

[1] Ic. Chr., p. 489-495.

of irreverence. Now the Father and the Son correspond in some degree to these inferior gods. Not that they are actively malevolent, but they have certain characteristics of a terrifying order. God the Father is throughout the Bible the author of chastisements and scourges. God the Son, merciful though he be, yet intimates that he will return to judge the world, and that he will disavow those who are not truly his disciples, thus consigning them to the secular arm of God the Father, who will condemn them to eternal punishment. But God the Spirit has no share in these horrors. Whenever he appears upon the scene, he is quiet, gentle, and inoffensive; and these qualities, combined with the absence of the more definite personality possessed by his colleagues, have effectually ensured his comparative insignificance in Christian worship and in Christian thought.

While this has been the course of affairs in reference to the persons in the Trinity—who, though dogmatically one, are popularly and practically three—a simultaneous displacement of all its members by still more comprehensible objects of worship has been going on. First in rank among these stands the Virgin Mary, so universally worshipped in Catholic countries. After her come the mass of saints, some of general, some of local celebrity; but who, no doubt, receive, each from his or her particular devotees, a far larger share of devotional attention than the Father or the Son themselves. For they are requested to intercede with these more exalted potentates; and we naturally pay more regard to our intercessors, show them more assiduous respect, feel towards them

more gratitude, than we do to those with whom they intercede, and who stand too far above us to be approached directly by us. Keightley, in his "History of England," expresses himself as shocked by the far larger share of the offerings of the pious received at Canterbury by the altar of Thomas-à-Becket than was received by the altars of the Virgin and of the Son. The proportion is as follows :—In one year St Thomas received £832, 12s. 3d.; the Virgin £63, 5s. 6d.; Christ only £3, 2s. 6d. Next year the martyr had £954, 6s. 3d.; Mary £4, 1s. 8d.; and Christ nothing at all. This relation is perfectly natural. Thomas-à-Becket was the local saint. He stood nearer to the people, was more intelligible to their minds, than the Virgin Mary; and the latter, again, was more intelligible to them than Jesus Christ, whose mystic attributes she did not share. This fact does but illustrate the common tendency of mankind to neglect the worship of the highest deity recognised in their formal creed, and to offer their prayers and their sacrifices to idols of lower pretensions and more human proportions.

That which, as the upshot of these speculations, we are chiefly concerned to note, is that religion everywhere contains, as its most essential ingredient, the conception of an unknown power; which power, thus offered by religion to the adoration of mankind, becomes the object of a double tendency: a tendency on the one hand to preserve it as a dim idea, represented to the mind under highly abstract forms; a tendency on the other hand, to bring it down to common comprehension by presenting it to the senses

under concrete symbols. But under all images, however material; under all embodiments, however gross; the central thought of a power hidden behind sensible phenomena, unknown and unknowable, still remains.

So far then as historical inquiry throws light upon the answer to the second question in the previous chapter, that answer will be in the affirmative. It renders it at least highly probable that the common elements of religion are, from their universal or all but universal prevalence, "a necessary and therefore permanent portion of our mental furniture." Nor is this conclusion invalidated by the hypothetical objection that there are races without a religion at all. Granting the fact, it admits of an explanation quite consistent with this view. For the races which are destitute of the religious idea may be so, not because they are superior to it, and can do without it, but because they are inferior to it, and have not yet perceived it. Thus, the savage nations who cannot count beyond their fingers, prove nothing against the necessity of numerical relations. Even though they cannot add their 10 toes to their 10 fingers, and thus make 20, yet the moment we perceive that 10+10=20 we perceive also that this relation is an absolute necessity, and it remains an unalterable fact in our intellectual treasury. No inability on the part of the savage to understand us can shake our conviction. Now the same thing may hold good of the ultimate elements of religious feeling. These also, when once the conditions are realised in thought, may prove necessary beliefs. Whether they are so or not is a question for philo-

sophy. To the examination of that question we must now proceed.

Religion, as the foregoing analysis has shown, puts forward as its cardinal truth the conception of a power which is neither perceptible by the senses nor definable by the intellect. For sensible perception requires a material object and a material organ; and intellectual definition requires an object which can be compared with other objects that are like it, discriminated from others that are unlike it, and classified according to that likeness and that unlikeness. In either case therefore the object must be a phenomenon having its place among phenomena, whether those of the sensible or those of the intelligible sphere. But if the power accepted by religion be neither perceptible nor definable, are we obliged to believe in the existence of so abstract an entity at all, or may we reject it as a figment of the human brain?

Perhaps we shall best be able to discover whether such a belief is necessary or not by endeavouring to do without it, and to frame a consistent conception of the universe from which it is entirely excluded.

There are various ways in which such a conception might be attempted. We may regard the world from the platform of Realism or from that of Idealism, and the nature of our Realism or of our Idealism may vary with the special school of thought to which we may belong. Realism in the first instance admits of two main subdivisions: into Common, or as Mr Spencer calls it, Crude Realism, and into Metaphysical Realism; and these two forms of it require separate treatment.

Common Realism is the primitive opinion of uneducated and of unreflecting persons, and is in fact simply the absence of any genuine opinion at all. They, I imagine, regard the external objects by which they are surrounded as so many actual entities, not only having an independent existence of their own, but an existence like that which they possess in our consciousness. Thus, an egg they would take to be in reality a white, brittle, hard thing on the outside, having a certain shape, size, and weight, and containing inside the shell a quantity of soft, whitish and yellowish substance with a given taste. These qualities, not excepting the taste, taken along with any other qualities that may be disclosed by more careful inquiry, they would conceive to constitute the whole of the egg. It is the same with other objects. What we perceive by our senses is thought by them to be a copy of the real things as they exist in nature, much as the retina of the eye, regarded from without, is seen to contain a copy in miniature of the surrounding scene. Common Realism, however, while it tacitly takes for granted an infinite number of separate entities, cannot account either for the origin of those entities or for their nature. Nor has it any account to give of the origin of life, for material things are in this system utterly destitute of life, and indeed opposed to it. They are precisely what our senses inform us of, and nothing more. Hence they furnish no answers to the questions: How did this world come into being, and how did it reach its present shape? How do men come to exist in it; for matter contains no vitality and no power of infusing vitality into itself? Therefore it is that the adherents of Common

Realism are invariably driven back upon a superior being, whom they term a Creator, and who supplies the motive impulse which is wanting in their world.

Metaphysical Realism professes to be the improvement of scholars upon the unsifted notions of the vulgar. It is the system to which, in its earlier and cruder form, Berkeley a century ago gave what once appeared to be its death-blow, but what may perhaps turn out to have been a wound sufficiently severe to cause prolonged insensibility, but not absolute extinction. It is not, however, with the purpose of completing the work of destruction, but of examining whether it affords a possible escape from the necessity of the religious postulate, that I refer to it here. Metaphysical Realists perceived clearly enough that the apparent qualities of sensible objects could not be the objects themselves. Even if they did not recognise this with regard to all the apparent qualities, they did so with regard to those termed "secondary," such as taste, smell, and colour. Later representatives of the school, such as Kant, extended the process by which this conclusion was reached to all apparent qualities whatsoever. Below the apparent qualities, however, these thinkers assumed a substance, "*substantiâ*," in which they inhered, and by which they were bound together, so as to constitute the object. And this substance — something unperceived underlying the qualities perceived—was their notion of matter. Observe now the position we have arrived at. No sooner does Realism abandon the untenable hypothesis that the qualities of the object are the object itself, than it is driven upon the assumption of an utterly unknowable and inconceivable entity; a

matter which is not perceptible by any of our senses, which is below, or in addition to, phenomena concerning which we can predicate nothing, and whose relation to the qualities it is supposed to support we cannot understand. But the necessity of some such assumption is the very assertion implied in all forms of religious faith. Realism, then, does not escape the pressure of this necessity, even though the entity it assumes is not precisely of the same character.

But is the difference in its character one that tells in favour of this variety of Realism, or in favour of religion? Assuredly substance, or matter, imagined as the bond between apparent qualities, is not an easier, simpler, or more intelligible conception than that of a universal power as the origin, source, or objective side of all physical phenomena. Granting even that the latter conception cannot be represented to the mind, a representation of the former is equally impossible. But does it explain the facts better? Let us see. In the first place, we must demand an accurate definition of what this supposed matter is. Is it passive, inanimate, incapable of independent action, and unable to develop out of itself the living creatures which in some way have come to exist? If so, we plainly require another entity in addition to matter, both to account for the active forces of our universe, and to originate the phenomenon of life. For if the qualities of body need a substratum, so also do those of mind. If it be held that the power from which mind emanates be the same as that which is evinced in so-called physical forces, then we have two distinct, if not independent, substances, beings,

or whatever we may prefer to call them: matter, pervading material objects in their statical condition, and force or life, pervading both consciousness and material objects in their dynamical condition. Or if the first be regarded as sufficient to account for motion as well as matter, then we have still two powers, one subsisting throughout the physical, the other throughout the mental world. How are these two substances related to one another? Is the substance of mind supreme, governing its material colleague? or is that of matter at the head of affairs, and that of mind subordinate? or are they equal and co-ordinate authorities, as in the Gnostic philosophy? Suppose we endeavour to elude these difficulties by the assertion that there is nothing else but the unperceivable substratum supporting material objects, and that in this all modes of existence take their rise, we are met by further and still more troublesome questions. For if, under the manifestations of this substance we include consciousness, then the distinction between matter and mind has vanished, and in calling this substance matter we are simply giving it an unmeaning name. In fact, it is a substance supporting not only the qualities of bodies, but also the chemical, electric, molar, molecular, and other forces throughout the universe, as well as sensation, thought, and emotion. Matter in short does everything which deity can be required to do; it originates motion; it produces living creatures; it feels; it thinks; it lives. Thus we have but stumbled upon God in an unexpected quarter. Suppose, however, that we take what is in this system the easier and more natural hypothesis of a substance of matter, a

substance of mind, and a still more hidden power superior to both, and from which both are derived, then we have but abandoned the perplexing questions raised by metaphysical Realism to take refuge in the religious position from which it seemed to offer a plausible deliverance.

Does Idealism help us? Idealism is of several forms. That represented by Berkeley need not occupy us here, for Berkeley not only admitted, but expressly asserted, the existence of an all-comprehending Power, and without this his philosophy would have appeared to himself unmeaning and incomprehensible. Nor need we stop to examine that more recent species of Idealism, as I hold it to be, which its illustrious author, Mr Herbert Spencer, has christened Transfigured Realism. Whatever differences may exist between Spencer and Berkeley—and I believe them to be more apparent then real—they are at one in the cardinal doctrine that sensible phenomena are but the varied manifestations of this ultimate Power. All such Idealism as this is in harmony with religion. But there are two forms which seem to be at variance with it, one of which I will term Moderate, and the other Extreme Idealism.

Moderate Idealism agrees with Berkeley in dismissing to the limbo of extinct metaphysical creatures the substance supposed to lurk beneath the apparent qualities of bodies. It holds that there is no such substance, and that these qualities, and therefore bodies themselves, exist only in consciousness. But it differs from Berkeley in omitting to provide any source whatever, external to ourselves, from which

these bodies can be derived. Not only are they in their phenomenal aspect mere states of our own consciousness, but they have no other aspect than the phenomenal one, and are in themselves nothing but phenomena. Rather inconsistently, this school of Idealism does not push its reasoning to its natural results, but concedes to other human beings something more than a merely phenomenal existence. Nothing exists but states of consciousness; but those peculiar states of my consciousness which I term men and women may be shown, by careful reasoning, to possess (in all probability) an existence of their own, even apart from my seeing, hearing, or feeling them. The process by which we reach this conclusion "is exactly parallel to that by which Newton proved that the force which keeps the planets in their orbits is identical with that by which an apple falls to the ground."[1]

Those peculiar modifications of colour, and that special mode of filling up empty space which I term "my friend," do indeed seem, if we push matters to an extreme, to come into existence only when he enters my room, and to cease to exist the moment he quits it. If he has any further vitality, it is only in the shape of that state of consciousness which is known as recollection. But Moderate Idealism escapes from this consequence, on the ground that modifications of body and outward actions, since they are connected with feelings in ourselves, must be connected with feelings also in the case of those other phenomena which we term human beings, and per-

[1] Mill's "Examination of Sir W. Hamilton's Philosophy," p. 209 (2nd ed.)

haps in the case of those we term animals.[1] But if this be so, how did so extraordinary a fact as that of consciousness arise? *Ex hypothesi*, there was nothing before it. Did it then suddenly spring into being, full-grown like Minerva, but, unlike Minerva, with no head of Jupiter to spring from? Or was it a gradual growth, and if so, from what origin? Go back as far as you will, you can find nothing but consciousness, and that the consciousness of limited beings (either men or animals); and it is no less difficult to conceive the beginning, from nothing at all, of the least atom of conscious life, than to conceive that of the profoundest philosopher. Observe, there is no world of any kind; and in this no-world (the contradiction is unavoidable) there suddenly arises, from no antecedent, a consciousness of external objects which are no-objects. Geology upon this theory is a myth; so is that branch of astronomy which treats of the formation of our planetary system from nebular matter. Stars, suns, planets, and crust of the earth only arose when they were perceived, and will cease to be when there is no living creature to perceive them any longer. Since, however, conclusions like these are in reality unthinkable, whatever efforts metaphysicians may make to think them, Moderate Idealism must of necessity complete its fabric by the admission of a Power from which both consciousness and the objects of consciousness have taken their rise. Should it persist in denying anything but a mental reality to the objects of consciousness, it must still suppose an

[1] Mr Mill, in treating the point, seems to have forgotten the animal world, but his argument would cover it.—Mill's "Examination of Sir W. Hamilton's Philosophy," p. 208, 209.

unknown source from which consciousness itself has been derived; otherwise it will entangle itself in two unthinkable propositions. First, that before men (or animals) existed there was absolute nothingness, an idea which we cannot frame; secondly, that where there was nothing at one moment there was the next moment something, a process which we *cannot* realise without supposing a time antecedent to that something, and which we *may not*, without the contradiction of introducing time in the midst of nothingness, realise by supposing a time antecedent to that something.

It was no doubt the vague feeling of these perplexities that forced John Stuart Mill, the most eminent defender of this school of thought, to denominate matter a Permanent Possibility of Sensation. This singular phrase well exemplifies the difficulties of his position. For is matter an external substance, existing independently, or not? If it is, then what becomes of the Berkeleyan doctrine? Mill and his followers are simply metaphysical Realists. But if not, what becomes of the permanence? It is not in us, for our sensations are not permanent; it is not in the matter, for there is none. And what is there a possibility of? Causing sensation, or having it? Not the former, for there is nothing to cause it; not the latter, for the possibility of our having sensations is a mere fact of our nature, and cannot serve to define matter. And where is the sensation located? The phraseology would seem to imply, that matter is in the permanent condition of possible feeling; just as a nerve may be in the permanent condition of possible excitation. But this would be placing sensation in the wrong

quarter. And if sensation be in us, we have not a permanent possibility, but a permanent actuality of sensation. So that unless the words be construed to mean that there is outside of us a permanent something which excites sensation, of which the modes vary (for this is the sense of possibility), they have no assignable meaning whatever. Mill, in fact, had been compelled, without wishing it, to recognise an ultimate power in nature; and his perception of this truth conflicted strangely, in his candid mind, with his idealistic prepossessions.

A more consistent and rigorous form of Idealism is that which has been referred to as the strict consequence of Moderate Idealism. This form, which I will term Extreme Idealism, denies the existence of persons as well as things. The Extreme Idealist believes himself to be the only being in the universe. There is to him no period preceding his own existence; none succeeding it. Past and future, except in his own life, have no meaning for him. We cannot reason with him, for all we may say is only a transient mode of his own sensations. Obviously, to such a philosophy there is no reply but one: it is simply unthinkable. Were any one seriously to defend it, the very seriousness of his defence would prove that he did not believe it. For against what or whom would he be contending? Against a phantom of his own mind. And the more pains he took to prove to us that he believed us to have no existence but as a part of himself, the less credit should we attach to his assertions.

Philosophy, therefore, is under a logical compulsion to make the same fundamental assumption as Religion —that of an ultimate, unknown, and all-pervading

Power, Origin, or Cause. Science, in a variety of ways, does the same. It does so, first, in its belief of a past and a future in the history of the solar system far transcending the past and future of humanity, or indeed of any form of life whatever. Passing at a glance over our brief abode on the face of the earth, Geology pushes its researches back into a time preceding by innumerable ages the existence of mankind, while her elder sister Astronomy carries her vision to a still remoter age, when even the planet we now inhabit was but a fragment in one indistinguishable mass. But it is not only these two sciences that assume the continuance of nature quite independently of our presence or absence; every other science does the like. The botanist, the chemist, the physicist, all believe that the facts they assert are facts in an external nature, the relations of which as now discovered by their several sciences held good before man existed, and will hold good after he has ceased to exist. But to say this, is to say in effect that there is something more than the mere phenomena disclosed by investigation; namely, an external reality persisting through all time in which the varied series of phenomena take their rise.

More clearly still does Science assert some such reality in its great modern doctrine of the Persistence of Force. Not that this doctrine is entirely new; for regarded in its metaphysical rather than its physical aspect it is but an expression in the language of the day of a truth which has long been realised as a necessity of thought. It is the converse of the ancient axiom, "*Nihil ex nihilo fit*," for if nothing can be made from nothing, neither can something pass into

nothing. The Persistence of Force is an expression of the fact that every cause must have an adequate effect; that in nature nothing can be lost, no particle of force pass into nonentity. Concentrated forces may be dissipated, and dissipated forces may be concentrated; or one variety of force may pass into another. But the ultimate fund of force remains ever unchangeable; nothing is ever created, nothing destroyed.

Observe, then, that Science, however cautiously it may keep within the range of the material world, however eagerly it may repudiate all investigation of ultimate causes as fruitless and unprofitable, cannot take one single step towards proving the propositions it advances without tacitly laying down an ontological entity as the basis of its demonstration. For to speak of its discoveries as laws of nature is simply to predicate a constant, unvarying force, which under like conditions always produces like results. And to declare the uniformity of nature, is merely to say that the methods of that force do not change—that it is the same now as it ever was, and will be the same throughout the eternal ages.

"Thus," writes Mr Herbert Spencer, "by the Persistence of Force, we really mean the persistence of some Power which transcends our knowledge and conception. The manifestations, as occurring in ourselves or outside of us, do not persist; but that which persists is the Unknown Cause of these manifestations. In other words, asserting the Persistence of Force, is but another mode of asserting an Unconditional Reality, without beginning or end." [1]

[1] Spencer's "First Principles," § 60, p. 189.

Philosophy, or Reasoned Thought, and Science, or Reasoned Observation, have both led us to admit, as a fundamental principle, the necessary existence of an unknown, inconceivable, and omnipresent Power, whose operations are ever in progress before our eyes, but whose nature is, and can never cease to be, an impenetrable mystery. And this is the cardinal truth of all religion. From all sides then, by every mode of contemplation, we are forced upon the same irresistible conclusion. The final question still remains, Is this ultimate element of all religion "the correlative of any actual truth or not?"

But for the prevalence, in recent times, of a philosophy which denies all connection between the necessity of a belief and its truth, I should have regarded such a question as scarcely worth the answering. To say that a belief is necessary and to say that it is true, would appear to all, but adherents of the extreme experiential school, one and the same thing. But in the present day this cannot be taken for granted, and I should be the last to complain that even that which seems most obvious should be tested by adverse criticism.

Ingenious, however, as their arguments are, philosophers of this school, when driven to reason out their views, cut their own throats. They commit a logical suicide. For what is the test of truth they hold up to us in lieu of necessity? Experience. But what in the last resort does our belief in experience rest upon? Simply upon a mental necessity. Nobody can tell us *why* he believes that the laws of nature will hold good to-morrow as they do to-day. He can indeed tell us that he has always found them constant

before, and therefore expects them to remain so. But this is merely to state the belief, not to justify it. Experience itself cannot be appealed to, to support our confidence in experience. True, we habitually say that we believe such and such results will follow such and such antecedents *because* we have always found them follow before. But our past experience is not the whole of the fact involved in the belief. It is our past experience, conjoined with the mental necessity of thinking that the future will resemble the past, that forms the convictions on which we act. Experience alone, without that mental necessity, could teach us nothing. If therefore our necessary beliefs need not be true, the belief in experience falls to the ground along with the rest, and experience cannot be put in place of necessity as a test of truth.

In fact, every argument drawn from the past fallibility of the test of necessity might be retorted with tenfold force against the test of experience. Observation has constantly misled mankind, and thousands of alleged facts, accepted upon imagined experience, have been disproved by more accurate examination. Observation and reasoning combined (as they often are) are exposed to the double danger of false premises and false inferences from true premises; while the addition of an element of testimony (a circumstance common in scientific inquiries) exposes every conclusion to a threefold possibility of error. Human beings are no more exempt from the possibility of mistaken science than from that of hasty metaphysics. But as, in matters of physical research, we do not discredit the use of our eyes because their perceptions are sometimes inaccurate, so in matters of metaphy-

sical inquiry we need not discredit the use of our minds because their apparent intuitions are now and then fallacious. In the one case, as in the other, the proper course is not to cast contempt upon the only instruments of discovery we have, but to apply those instruments again and again, omitting no precaution that may serve to correct an observation and to test an argument. But when we have done our utmost to attain whatever certainty the nature of the subject permits, we cannot reasonably turn round upon ourselves and say: "True, my eyes assure me of this fact, but human eyes have erred so often that I cannot accept their verdict;" or, "No doubt my mind forces this conclusion upon me as a necessity of thought, but so many assumed necessities have turned out not to be necessary at all that I must refuse to listen to my mind;" for this is not really the caution of science, but the rashness of philosophic theory. For we can have no higher conviction than that arising in a necessity of thought. Nothing can surpass the certainty of this. Grant that we may yet be wrong: we can never know it, and we can have no reason to think it. To oppose to a necessary belief such a train of reasoning as this:

> Necessary beliefs (so-called) have often proved false:
> This is a necessary belief (so-called):
> Therefore it may prove false,

is in reality to seek to overthrow a strong conviction by a weak one; an intuition by a syllogism; a proposition felt immediately to be true by an inference open to discussion. Arguments like this resemble the procedure of a man who should tell us, when we

meet a friend, that we cannot possibly be sure of his identity because on some previous occasion in our lives we mistook Jones for Thompson.

Exaggerated as this doctrine of the experiential school is thus seen to be, yet it has done good service by putting thinkers on their guard, not to accept as necessary and ultimate some beliefs which are only contingent and dissoluble. Two conditions must be fulfilled in order to effect a presumption of necessity. The belief must always arise under certain conditions; that is, it must be universal in the only sense in which that term can fitly be applied. Having arisen, it must be incapable of expulsion from the mind; its terms must adhere together so firmly that they cannot be parted by adverse criticism, either our own or that of others. Both these conditions are fulfilled by the fundamental postulate of religion. Given the appropriate conditions—human beings raised even a little above the lowest savagery—and it at once takes possession of their minds. After this, it persists in spite of every attempt to do without it, and the highest philosophy is compelled to give it the place of honour in the forefront of its teaching.

Observe now, that what this philosophy accepts and incorporates into its system is religion and not theology. These two must be broadly distinguished from one another. Religion might be described as the soul of which theology is the body. Religion is an abstract, indefinable, pervading sentiment; theology, a concrete, well-defined, limited creed. The one is emotional; the other intellectual. The one is a constant element of our nature; the other fluctuates from generation to generation, and varies from place

to place. Theology seeks to bind down religion within immovable forms. Against these forms there is constantly arising both an intellectual and an emotional protest. The intellect objects to them as untrue in the name of science (in the largest sense); the emotions struggle against them as cramping their freedom in the name of religion itself. Thus between the human mind and dogma, between the religious sentiment and dogma, there is going on a perpetual warfare. Religious sentiment is no sooner born than the tendency to limit and to define makes itself felt. It is confined within a set of dogmas, and forbidden under every species of pains and penalties to pass over its allotted bounds. Sooner or later, religious sentiment bursts through every restriction; seems for a moment to breathe the invigorating air of freedom, but falls again into the hands of new theologians, with another framework of dogmas; to be again broken through in its turn when its fettering influence can be no longer borne. In carrying on this continually renovated contest—which is seen in its highest activity in great religious reformations—the religious sentiment seeks the alliance of intellect, which latter supplies it with deadly weapons drawn from the armouries of science, logic, and historical research. Thus the overthrow of theology is in great part an intellectual work. But it must not be forgotten that the very deepest hostility to theological systems is inspired by the very emotion to which these systems seek to give a formal and definite expression.

The historical progress of religion is thus in some degree a counterpart of the progress described by

Heine (in the lines heading this Book) as that of his individual mind. First of all there arises in the mind of man, so soon as he begins to speculate on the world in which he lives, the idea of a Creator. He cannot conceive the existence of the material objects with which he is familiar without conceiving also some being more powerful than himself who has made them what they are. His notions of creation may be, no doubt often are, extremely limited. He may confine the operations of his God to that small portion of the universe with which he is most familiar. But that the idea of an invisible yet pre-eminent deity arises very early in the mental development of the human race, and remains brooding dimly above the popular idolatry, has been abundantly shown. This is the belief in God the Father. The second stage, so closely interwoven with the first as to be inseparable from it in actual history, is the incarnation of this idea. The supreme Creator is too lofty, too abstract, too great, to be held steadily before the mind and worshipped in his unclouded glory. The children of Israel cannot bear the immediate presence of Jehovah, nor can even Moses meet the brightness of his face. Hence the material shapes in which the objects of adoration are embodied. When divine attributes are given to idols; when a golden calf is taken instead of the invisible God; when the Father is said to assume the form of a man, to live a human life, and die a human death, when apostles, saints, and virgins are addressed in prayer or celebrated in praise, an incarnation has occurred. In the language of the traditions we have quoted, the supreme God has gone away and left the govern-

ment of the world to his inferiors. Practically, such incarnations belong to the earliest period of religion, and no popular creed has ever been entirely without them. No sooner is the religious idea conceived in the mind, than it begins to be clothed in flesh and bones. But in the order of thought these two stages are separable. For idols are not worshipped until the notion of some power which is not human, of which the nature is not understood, has arisen in the worshippers. Then a concrete expression is desired, and we have in poetical language the belief in God the Son.

Last of all comes the belief—more properly an emotion than a belief—in the Holy Spirit. With this step a far higher grade of religious sentiment is reached. For God is now conceived, not only as creating or as governing the world without, but as entering into the mind of man to inspire his actions and influence his heart. A relation which up to this point was merely external—like that of the Creator to the created, or of superior to inferior—is rendered internal and intimate. The Holy Spirit not only speaks *to* our souls, but it speaks in them and through them. We receive, not the arbitrary command of an almighty potentate, but the inspiring force of a being who, while raising us above ourselves, is still a part, the best part, of ourselves. This indeed, in the deep imagination of the poet, makes all men noble.

Yet not in such a creed as this, sublime as it is in comparison with those that have gone before it, is the final resting-place of religious feeling. For every word or phrase in which we endeavour to give form

to that feeling tends to lower and to corrupt it by the admixture of elements which are foreign to its genuine nature. To clothe this sentiment in language is itself an incarnation. For whether we speak of a Force, a Power, or a Spirit, of an ultimate Cause, or an all-pervading Essence; of the Absolute, or of the Reality beyond phenomena, these terms are but symbols of the Supreme, not the Supreme itself.

> "Name ist Schall und Rauch
> Umnebelnd Himmelsgluth."

All that we can say is, that while we *know* nothing but that which either our senses perceive, or our minds understand, we *feel* that there is something more. Both the world without and the world within, both that which is perceived and that which perceives, require an origin beyond themselves. Both compel us to look, as their common source, to a Being alike unknown and unknowable, whose nature is shrouded in a mystery no eye can pierce, and no intellect can fathom.

This is the great truth which religion has presented to philosophy, and which philosophy, if she be truly (as her name implies) the love of wisdom, will not disdain to incorporate with the more recently discovered treasures belonging to her peculiar sphere. For it is not the part of wisdom to spurn as worthless even the childish lispings prompted by the profound idea that has inspired the faith of men, from that of the far past to that of the present hour, from that of the rudest African to that of the most enlightened European. Rather is it the part of wisdom to excavate

that idea from amidst the strange incrustations under which it is hidden, to understand its significance, and to recognise its value. Thus may we assign to it a fitting place within the limits of a system which does equal honour, and accords equal rights, to the scientific faculty and to the emotional instinct.

CHAPTER III.

THE SUBJECTIVE ELEMENT.

WHEN speaking of the fundamental postulates involved in the religious idea, we pointed out that, besides the unknown cause of physical phenomena, "every religion assumes also that there is in human nature something equally hyperphysical with the object which it worships, whether we call this something soul, or mind, or spirit." Let us call it soul. And first let us examine what it is that religion says of the soul, after which we may be in a position to consider what degree of truth, if any, is involved in its assertions.

Now the great fact which presents itself to our notice in this inquiry is the broad line of demarcation which religion has everywhere drawn between the mental and corporeal functions of man, or in other words, between his soul and his body. Generally, it expresses this grand distinction by the assertion that the soul continues to live after the body is dissolved. This doctrine is very ancient and very widespread. A few illustrations of its prevalence are all that can be given here.[1]

[1] See much interesting evidence in Dulaure, "Histoire Abrégée de différens Cultes," vol. i. chs. xxiv.–xxvii.; and a valuable discussion of whole the subject in Tylor's "Primitive Culture."

The rude people of Kamschatka, who had so little notion of a providence, believed in a subterranean life after death. The soul they thought was immortal, and the body would at some time rejoin it, when the two would live on together, much as they do here but under happier conditions. Their place of abode was to be under the earth, where there was another earth resembling ours. Some of them objected to be baptized, because they would then be compelled to meet their enemies the Russians, instead of living among their own people under ground. Animals too were all of them to live again.[1] The Tartars, when visited by Carpin, had some notion that after death they would enjoy another life where they would perform the same actions as in this.[2] "The most intelligent Greenlanders," writes a traveller among that people, "assert that the soul is a spiritual being quite different from the body and from all matter, that requires no material nourishment, and while the body is decaying in the ground, lives after death and needs a nourishment that is not corporeal, but which they do not know."[3] The American Indians firmly believed in the immortality of the soul. They thought it would keep the same tendencies after death as the living man had evinced; hence their custom—one that is widely spread—of burying the property of the dead along with the body. The souls were obliged after death to take a long journey, at the end of which they arrived at their appropriate places of suffering and enjoyment. The Paradise of virtuous Indians consisted in the very

[1] Kamschatka, p. 269–273. [2] Bergeron, vol. i. art. 3, p. 32.
[3] H. G., p. 242.

definite pleasures of good hunting and fishing, eternal spring, abundance of everything with no work, and all the satisfactions of the senses.[1] The Kafirs, as we have already seen, worship their ancestors, whose "Amadhlozi," or spirits, they believe to continue in existence after death. What they mean by Amadhlozi they explain with tolerable clearness by saying that they are identical with the shadow. These spirits are the true objects of a Kafir's worship, being supposed to possess great power over the affairs of their descendants and relatives for weal or woe. They are believed to reappear in the form of a certain species of harmless snakes, and should a man observe such a snake on the grave of his deceased relation, he will say, "Oh, I have seen him to-day basking on the top of the grave."[2] Similar reverence for the dead is shown in other parts of Africa. In his lecture on the Ashantees, Mr Reade says that, "on the death of a member of the household he is sometimes buried under the floor of the hut, in the belief that his spirit may occasionally join the circle of the living. Food also is placed upon the grave, for they think that as the body of man contains an indwelling spirit, so there exists in the corruptible food an immaterial essence on which the ghost of the departed will feed."

To come to races standing higher in the scale of civilisation: the Peruvians had definite notions of a future state, with an upper world in which the good lived a quiet life, free from trouble, and a lower world in which the bad were punished by suffering all the miseries and troubles of this terrestrial condition with-

[1] N. F., tome 3, p. 351–353.
[2] R. S. A., pt. 2, p. 142.—K. N., pp. 161, 162.

out intermission.[1] In China the utmost respect is paid to deceased progenitors, who are the objects of a regular *cultus*. India has had from early ages its highly-developed and subtle notions of the distinction of spirit from body, and the former is held to prolong its existence after its separation from the latter, both as disembodied in heavens or hells, and embodied in animals or other men. Some schools believed in the immortality of the soul; others asserted that its final destination was extinction. Buddhism ranged itself with the latter opinion, while still maintaining the doctrine of metempsychosis, and of rewards and punishments both in this world and in numerous others to which spirits went in the course of their wanderings. Parsee souls hover about the grave a few days; then proceed upon a long journey. At its conclusion they pass over a narrow bridge, which the good traverse in safety to enter Paradise, while the bad fall over it and go into hell. In the Mussulman faith there are likewise but two destinies open to man—eternal happiness and eternal suffering. Among the Jews in the time of Christ two doctrines prevailed. Their ancient religion, while aware of the distinction between the spirit and the body, left the continued life of the former an open question. Hence the Pharisees asserted, while the Sadducees denied, a future state. Christ was in this respect a Pharisee of the Pharisees. He, however, like Mahomet, provided only two abodes for the souls of men; one in heaven with his Father, the other in hell, where the fire was never quenched. It was felt, however, by the general Christian world that this sharp separation of all man-

[1] C. R., b. 2, ch. vii.

kind into black and white, goats and sheep, was quite untenable. Hence the Catholic institution of Purgatory, which, whatever may be said against it, is a wise and liberal modification of the harsh doctrine of Christ, affording a resource for the vast intermediate mass who are neither wholly virtuous nor wholly wicked, and providing an agreeable exercise for that natural piety which prompts us to mingle the names of departed friends in our devotions, whether (as in Africa) to pray to them, or (as in Europe) to pray for them.

From this brief review of the opinions of various races, it will be evident that some conception of a spirit in man as distinguished from his body prevails and always has prevailed throughout the world. The special characteristic of this spiritual essence has always been held to be its immateriality. All religions conceive it as distinct from the body, most of them evincing this view by treating it as capable of independent existence. Many of them no doubt invest the spirit after death with a material form, but this is the clothing of the idea, not the idea itself. The form is received after the spirit has left its terrestrial body, and does not originally belong to it; as in the case of the serpents in South Africa, in which ancestral souls are thought to dwell. This immaterial nature is clearly expressed—so far as such an abstract idea can find clear expression from a rude people—by those Kafirs who compare the soul to a shadow. Nothing in the external world seems to have so purely subjective a character as shadows; things which cannot be felt or handled, and which appear to have no independent substance.

Immateriality then is universally asserted (or at-

tempted to be asserted) of the soul. This is of the very essence of the idea. No race believes that any portion of the body, or the body as a whole, is the same thing as mind or spirit. But immortality is not equally involved in the idea or inseparable from it. Notably the Buddhistic creed—held by a considerable fraction of mankind—teaches its votaries to look forward to utter extinction as the *summum bonum*. True, the masses of average believers may not dwell upon the hope of Nirvana, but upon that of heaven.[1] But the authorised dogma of the Church is, that "not enjoyment and not sorrow is our destined end" or goal, but the absolute rest, if so it may be called, of ceasing to exist. And that this dogma was fervently accepted and thoroughly believed in as a genuine "gospel," the early literature of Buddhism amply proves. The Jews, a most religious people, had no settled hope of immortality provided by their creed, though the account of the creation of Adam shows how clearly they distinguished mind from matter. Warburton indeed infers the authenticity of the Hebrew Revelation from the very fact of the absence of the doctrine of immortality; for no author of a popular religion, except God himself, could have afforded to dispense with so important an article. The more defective Judaism was, the more clearly it was divine. Nor were the classical nations of Greece and Rome at all more certain. With them also opinions differed—some, like Plato and his followers, asserting the immortality of the soul; others, like

[1] See some evidence bearing on this point in a paper by the author, entitled "Recent Publications on Buddhism," "Theological Review," July 1872, p. 313.

Epicurus and his school, denying it. Cicero discusses it as an open question, though himself holding to the belief in future existence. His two possible alternatives are continued life in a condition of happiness, or utter cessation of life; either of which he accepts with equal calmness. The fear of hell did not torment him: "post mortem quidem sensus aut optandus aut nullus est."[1] Even if we are not to be immortal, as he hopes, nevertheless it is a happy thing for man to be extinguished at the fitting season.[2] Less philosophical people, however, were troubled, like Christians, with the notion of a future world of punishment; and Lucretius addresses himself with all the ardour of a man proclaiming a beneficent gospel to the dissipation of this popular delusion:—

> "Nil igitur mors est, ad nos neque pertinet hilum,
> Quandoquidem natura animi mortalis habetur."[3]

Like other thinkers of his time, he distinguishes between the *animus* and *anima*—spirit and soul, and this threefold division of the nature of man subsisted for a time in the language and ideas of Christians. But the essential point is that, whatever further subdivisions may have been made, all schools, ancient and modern, pagan and Christian, agreed in the fundamental distinction between the spiritual principle and the material instruments; between mind and matter, or soul and body.

Such, then, is the universal voice of the religious instinct. Let us test the truth of this second postulate as we did that of the first: by endeavouring to

[1] Cato Major, xx. 74. [2] Ibid., xxiii. 86.
[3] De Rerum Nat., iii. 830.

do without it. Then we have matter and motion of matter; and the problem is:—Given these elements to find the resultant, mind. Motion is merely change of matter from place to place; therefore the question is, whether in any kind of matter and any changes of matter we can discover mind. Consider the material world statically. As known to science (and we have no right to go beyond scientific observation now), it contains certain properties perceptible to the senses, such as colour, sound, taste, and smell, roughness, smoothness, and other tangible qualities, with extension and resistance, discoverable by the muscular sense and touch combined. Any further properties which a deeper analysis may disclose will still belong to the domain of sensible perception, the senses being the instruments employed in their discovery. In which of these statical conditions of matter can mind be shown to be involved? Or what combination of statical conditions can produce mind as a part of the compound? Plainly any attempt to discover it in matter at rest would be an absurdity. Now consider the world dynamically. Here we have matter in motion, matter as the recipient and the transmitter of certain quantities of force. The mode of motion may be either molar (that of masses through space), or molecular (that of particles within a mass). In either case it is nothing but change of position relatively to other objects. Now, how can change of position either be mind, or result in mind? Take the case of a planet whirling through space. Does this molar motion, considered in any conceivable light, bring us one step nearer to mental phenomena? But all molar motion is of the same kind, and however completely analysed,

can lead to nothing but matter changing its position in space. Is molecular motion in better case? When light is transmitted to the eye, the vibrations of the atmosphere, which form the objective side of this phenomenon, arriving at the optic nerve, cause corresponding vibrations in it, and these transmitted to the brain result in certain movements in its component particles. Which of all these vibrations and movements is sensation? At what point does the physical fact of changes in molecules of matter pass into the mental fact of changes in the quantity or quality of the light perceived? Evidently no such point of transition can be found. And not only can it not be found, but the bare hypothesis of its existence is negatived by the fact that every physical movement produces an exactly equivalent amount of physical movement; so that there is nothing whatever in the resultant which is not accounted for in the antecedents, and nothing in the antecedents which has not its full effect in the resultant. There is thus no room left for the passage of the objective fact of molecular motion into the subjective fact of feeling.

Although these considerations practically exhaust the question, yet another aspect of it may, for the sake of greater clearness, be briefly touched upon. If the doctrine of abiogenesis be accepted, it may be thought to afford some confirmation to the materialistic hypothesis that mind is but a function or property of matter. Do we not here see (it may be asked) life and sensation arising out of non-sentient materials? And if a single living creature can thus arise, then, by the doctrine of evolution, all mind whatever is affiliated

on matter. Such a conclusion, however, would be quite unwarranted by the facts observed. In abiogenesis unorganic matter is seen to pass into organic matter, and this is the whole of the process known to science. To assume that at some period in this process the material constituents of the newly-formed creature acquire the property of sensation is, to say the least, a very unscientific proceeding. For, throughout all their permutations, the component elements can (or could with improved instruments) be exactly observed, measured, and weighed; enabling us to say that so and so much, such and such of the inorganic elements has become so and so much, such and such of the organic compound. Now the factors of this compound do not (*ex hypothesi*) contain sensation. How, then, did the compound acquire it? Where is your warrant for suddenly introducing a consequent sensation—for which you have no assignable antecedent?

Thus it is evident that between mind and matter, between spirit and body, between internal and external phenomena, there is a great gulf fixed, which no scientific or metaphysical cunning can succeed in bridging over. Matter is never sensation, and cannot be conceived as ever becoming sensation. The chain of material phenomena, with its several series of causes and effects, is never broken; no physical cause is without its adequate physical effect, nor is any physical effect without a physical cause sufficient to produce it. The body is to the mind an external, material phenomenon; closely connected indeed with mental states, and always more or less present to consciousness, but no part of our true selves, no necessary element in our conception of what we

actually are. Every portion of the bodily frame can be regarded by us as an outward object, wholly independent of ourselves, and logically, if not practically, separable from ourselves. Many portions, such as the limbs, are actually so separable; and all of them are separable in thought.

Still more impassable is this chasm in nature seen to be when we remark, that there are two all-pervading elements in which mind and matter have their being, and that the phenomena within each element have definite relations to other phenomena within the same element, but are incapable of being brought into a like relation with those of the other element. These two elements are Space and Time. Material particles are related to one another in space, and in space alone. They are nearer to, or more distant from, above or below, to the north, south, east, or west of, the other material particles with which we compare them. But they are not earlier or later than other particles. The existence of concrete objects may be earlier or later than that of other concrete objects; but when we talk of their existence as earlier or later, we are talking of their relation to consciousness, not of their relation to one another. It is the total framed and classified by the mind that has a relation in time to some other similar total; each total, analysed into its ultimate atoms, has only relations in space to the other total, likewise analysed into its ultimate atoms. Contrariwise, mental objects, or states of consciousness, are related to one another in time, and in time alone. States of consciousness can be compared as earlier or later, simultaneous or successive. They have no space-relations either to one another or to the material

world. It is common indeed to consider the mind as located *in* the body, but this is incorrect. For absolutely nothing is meant by saying that anything is in a given place except that it stands in given space-relations to surrounding objects. My body is in a place because it is *upon* the ground, *in* the air, *below* the clouds, *amid* a certain environment which constitutes the country and locality of that country which it is in. But my mind has no surrounding objects of this nature at all. The thought, say, of a distant friend can by no possibility be imagined as enclosed within the grey matter of the brain, just to the right of a nerve A, and in contact with a ganglion B. This thought, and its accompanying emotion, could not be found by any vivisection (if such were possible), though its correlative physical condition might. Hence the mind is not in the body, but is an independent entity whose phenomena, successive in time, run parallel to but never intermingle with the phenomena of body, extended in space.

From the view here stated of the irremovable distinction between mind and matter an important corollary will be seen to follow.[1] No physical movement (it has been shown) can be conceived as passing into a state of consciousness, for each physical movement begets further physical movement, and while it is fully spent in its physical consequent is itself fully

[1] The doctrine here stated is not my own invention. It was first published (so far as I know) by Mr Shadworth Hodgson in his "Theory of Practice," vol. i. p. 416–436, § 57; but I am indebted for my acquaintance with it to Mr D. A. Spalding, who discovered it independently, and announced it in the *Examiner*, December 30, 1871; September 6, 1873; March 14, 1874; and in *Nature*, January 8, 1874. See also his letter to the *Spectator*, November 21, 1874.

accounted for by its physical antecedent. The converse of this doctrine must therefore be equally true. That is to say, no state of consciousness can pass into a physical movement, for, if it could, this movement would have another than a physical antecedent. In other words, the mind can in no way influence the actions of the body. It cannot stand in a causal relation to any physical fact whatever. Hence the doctrine of the will (not only of free will but of any will) falls to the ground. For the current conception of a will supposes that a chain of material events passes at some point in its course into a state of consciousness, and that this state of consciousness again originates a chain of material events. Say that I hear some one call my name, and go to the window to ascertain who it is. Then the common explanation would be, not only that the atmospheric undulations, which are the material correlative of sound passing into the brain by the auditory nerves, produced the sensation of hearing, which is true, but that this sensation in its turn produced those exertions of the limbs which result in my arrival at the window, which is erroneous. According to the view here adopted, the atmospheric undulations stand in a direct relation of causation to the affection of the auditory nerve, and this affection, in a direct relation of causation, to the resulting movements. The states of consciousness in like manner stand in a direct relation of simple sequence to each other; the sensation of sitting in a room being followed by that of hearing my name, this by the thought that there is some one outside calling me, this by the sensation of motion through

space, and this last by that of seeing the person from whom the call emanated standing in the expected place. But at no point can the one train of events be converted into the other. And while the train of external sequences does influence the train of internal sequences, this latter has no corresponding influence upon the former. For this would imply that at some period in the succession physical movements lost themselves in consciousness; ceased to *be* physical movements, and became something of an alien nature. It would imply further that such movements originated *de novo* from something of an alien nature having no calculable or measurable relation to them. Either of which implications would constitute an exception to the Persistence of Force.

Man is, in short, as the adherents of this opinion have called him, a "conscious automaton." He does not will his own actions, nor do external manifestations, whether those of the unconscious or the conscious orders of existence, influence his will. But along with the set of objective facts there is always present a parallel set of subjective facts, and the subjective facts stand in an invariable relation to the objective facts. So that where the material circumstances, both those of the surrounding world and those of the body, are of a given character, the non-material circumstance, the state of mind, is also of a given and precisely corresponding character. Variations in the one imply variations in the other; feelings in the one change or remain fixed with changes or fixity in the other.

Could the friends of dogmatic religion know the

things belonging to their peace, they would bestow upon this doctrine their most earnest support; for it deals the death-blow to that semi-scientific materialism which derives a certain countenance from the discoveries of the day, and which is—second to religious dogmas themselves—the most dangerous enemy of the spiritual conception of the universe and of mankind. Not that in lifting a voice against materialistic views, I mean for a moment to lend a helping hand to the vulgar and irreverent outcry which is so often raised against matter itself as something gross and degraded, and deserving only of a contemptuous tolerance at our hands. I should have thought that the endless beauty of the material universe, and the varied enjoyments to be derived from its contemplation, as also the profound instruction to be obtained by its study, would have sufficed to give it a higher place in the estimation of religious minds. With such opposition to materialism as this I can have no vestige of sympathy. The form of materialism which I contend against, not as irreligious but as unphilosophic, is that which confounds the two orders of phenomena—physical and mental—under one idea, that of matter. Matter is supposed in this philosophy to be the parent of mind. A bridge is sought to be thrown across the great gulf which is fixed between us and the world without. But the moment we seek to walk over this imaginary bridge it crashes beneath our feet, and we are hurled into the abyss below.

Between that which feels, thinks, perceives, and reasons on the one hand, and that which is felt,

thought about, perceived, and reasoned on, there is no community of nature. The distinction between these two, though it need not be ultimate in the order of things, is absolutely ultimate in the order of thought. In their own undiscoverable nature these two manifestations may be one; in their relation to us they are for ever two.

CHAPTER IV.

THE RELATION OF THE OBJECTIVE TO THE SUBJECTIVE ELEMENT.

ONE final postulate has been found to be involved in all religion, namely, that between the human essence spoken of as the subjective element, and the power spoken of as the objective element, "there is held to be a singular correspondence, their relationship finding its concrete expression in religious worship on the one side and theological dogma on the other." Ritual, consecration of things and places, ordination of priests, omens, inspiration of prophets and of books, all of them imply the supposed possibility of such a relation. All of them, however, from their contradictory and variable character, prove that they are but imperfect efforts to find utterance for the emotion which underlies them all. But that this emotion is incapable of an explanation consistent with rational belief is not therefore to be taken for granted.

Consider, first, that in order to be aware of the existence of the ultimate and unknown power, we must possess some faculty in our constitution by which that power is felt. It must, so to speak, come in contact with us at some point in our nature.

Now, no sensible perception can lead us to this

conception as a generalisation. The whole universe, regarded merely as a series of presentations to the senses, contains not a single object which can possibly suggest it. Nor can any combination of such presentations be shown to include within them any such idea. Neither can the existence of such a power be inferred by the exercise of the reasoning faculty. There is no analogical case from which the inference can be drawn. When we reason we proceed from something known to something unknown, and conclude that the latter, resembling the former in one or more of its qualities, will resemble it also in the quality yet to be established. In exploring, for instance, some deserted spot, we find traces of a building. Now, previous experience has taught us that such buildings are only found where human builders have made them. We conclude, therefore, that we have stumbled upon a work of human hands. Suppose we explore further and find the remains of the building very extensive. We now draw the further inference that it was inhabited by a wealthy man, because we know that only the wealthy can afford to live in magnificent houses. But if prolonged excavation lead to the discovery of long rows of buildings, of various sizes and having streets between them, we confidently assert that we have unearthed a ruined city; for we are aware that no single man, however rich or powerful, is likely to have built so much. Of these three inferences, the first only is, strictly speaking, infallibly true. But the others are rendered by familiar analogies so highly probable as to be practically certain. Now let the thing sought be, not some single cause of a single phenomenon, or the various

causes of various phenomena, but the ultimate cause of all phenomena whatever,—where is the corresponding case on which we can proceed to argue? Plainly there is none. There is no *other* world or system to which we can appeal and say, "Those stars and those planets were made by a God, therefore our own sun and its planets must have been made by a God also." Every single argument we can frame to establish the existence of deity assumes in its major premiss the very thing to be proved. It takes for granted that phenomenal objects require a cause, and were not the idea of this necessity already in the mind it could not take one single step. For if it be contended, say, that the world could not exist without a Creator, we have but to ask, "Why not?" and our adversary can proceed no further with his argument. All he can ever do is to appeal to a sentiment in us corresponding to the sentiment of which he himself is conscious.

Thus it appears that neither direct observation, nor reasoning, which is generalised observation, supplies the materials for an induction as to the existence of an Unknowable Cause. Yet this idea is so persistent in the human race as to resist every effort to do without it. In one form or another it invariably creeps in. There is but one possible explanation of such a fact: namely, that it is one of those primary constituents of our nature which are incapable of proof because they are themselves the foundations on which proof must be erected. We cannot demonstrate a single law of nature without supposing a world external to ourselves. And we cannot suppose a world external to ourselves without referring explicitly or implicitly to an unknown entity manifested in that world. The

faculty by which this truth is known must be considered as a kind of internal sense. It is a direct perception. And precisely as objects of direct perception by the senses appear widely dissimilar at different distances, to different men, and to the same man at different times, so the object of the religious emotion is variously conceived in different places and ages, by different men, and by the same man at different times. Moreover, as the religious sentiment in the mind of man perceives its object, the Ultimate Being, so that Being is conceived as making itself known to the the mind of man through the religious sentiment. A reciprocal relation is thus established; the Unknowable causing a peculiar intuition, the mind of man receiving it. And this is the grain of fact at the foundation of the numerous statements of religious men, that they have felt themselves inspired by God, that he speaks to them and speaks through them, that they enter into communion with him in prayer, and obey his influence during their lives. We need not discard such feelings as idle delusions. In form they are fanciful and erroneous; in substance they are genuine and true. And in a higher sense the adherent of the universal religion may himself admit their title to a place in his nature. To use the words of a great philosopher, "he, like every other man, may consider himself as one of the myriad agencies through whom works the Unknown Cause;" "he too may feel that when the Unknown Cause produces in him a certain belief, he is thereby authorised to profess and act out that belief."[1]

But we may go still deeper in our examination of

[1] Spencer's "First Principles," 2nd ed., § 34, p. 123.

the nature of the relation between the Ultimate Being and the mind of man. To do so we must briefly recur to the philosophical questions touched upon in the second chapter of this Book. We there discussed four possible modes of viewing the great problem presented by the existence of sensible objects: Common and Metaphysical Realism, Moderate and Complete Idealism. Let us briefly reconsider these several systems to discover whether any one of them affords a satisfactory solution.

Common Realism is excluded by the consideration that it treats the qualities of external objects as existing in those objects and not in the percipient subject. It requires but little reflection to prove that such qualities are modes of consciousness; not modes of absolute being. This defect is surmounted in Metaphysical Realism, which, however, is liable to the fatal objection, that it takes for granted an abstract substance in material things, which substance is like the Unknowable, utterly inconceivable, yet is not the Unknowable, and is incapable of accounting for any of the manifestations belonging to the mental order. So that we should have a superfluous entity brought in to form the substance of matter, of which entity neither our senses, nor our reason, nor our emotions, give us any information. For matter, in the abstract, is not the matter perceived by the senses; nor is it the object of the religious sentiment; nor is its existence capable of any kind of proof save that which consists in establishing the necessity of some kind of Permanent Reality below phenomena. And this Reality is not only the substratum of material, but of all phenomena whatsoever. Moderate Idealism is in

no better case. For in denying all true existence except to living creatures it fails utterly to give any rational account of that order of events which is universally and instinctively referred to external causes, nor can it find any possible origin for the living creatures in whose reality it believes. Extreme Idealism recognises no problem to be dealt with, and can therefore offer no solution.

Each of these systems, however, while false as a whole, contains a partial truth. Extreme Idealism is the outcome of the ordinary, unreflecting Realism; for if the Common Realist be convinced that appearances do not imply existence, and if he believe in no existence but appearances, the ground is cut from under his feet, and he remains standing upon nothing. He knows only phenomena, and the phenomena are mere ideas of his own mind. The truth common to these two extremes is that so emphatically asserted by Berkeley, that the *esse* of material objects is *percipi;* that we exhaust the physical phenomenon when we describe its apparent qualities, and need not introduce besides these a material substance to which those qualities are related as its accidents. They are not the accidents, but the actual thing, in so far as it is material. Metaphysical Realism and moderate Idealism are united in the recognition of the truth that the phenomena are not the ultimate realities, and that the qualities of bodies, when analysed, are subjective, not objective; forms of the human mind, and not independent, external existences.

Hence these various philosophies, like the various religions of which they are in some sort metaphysical parallels, must be considered as preparing the way for

the admission of that all-embracing truth which is the common ground of metaphysics and religion.

Examine a simple objective phenomenon. Then you find that you can separate it into all its component qualities: its colour, taste, smell, extension, and so forth; and that after all these qualities have been taken into account nothing of the object remains save the vague feeling of an unknown cause by which the whole phenomenon is produced. All the apparent qualities, without exception, are resolvable into modes of consciousness, but the whole object is not so resolvable. For the question still remains, How did we come to have those modes of consciousness? Thus the analysis of the commonest material object leads us straight to an unknowable origin of known manifestations. And each particular phenomenon brings us to the same result. But are we to assume a special Unknowable for each special object? A little consideration will show that the division and subdivision we make of the objects of sensible perception resembles their apparent qualities in being purely subjective, and indeed more than subjective, arbitrary. For I consider an object as one or many, according to the point of view from which I regard it. The glass which I hold in my hand is at this moment one; but the next moment it is shivered into a thousand atoms, and each of these atoms is of complex character, and resolvable into still simpler parts. The planet we inhabit is, for the astronomer, one object; for the geologist a number of distinct rocks; for the botanist it is composed of mineral and vegetable constituents, and of these, the latter, which alone engage his attention, are numerous and various; for the chemist it consists of an infinite multitude of ele-

mentary atoms variously combined. Hence unity and multiplicity are mere modes of subjective reflection; not ultimate modes of objective being. And the Unknowable cannot, strictly speaking, be regarded as either one or many, since each alike implies limitation and separation from something else. Rather is it all-comprehending; the Universal Foundation upon which unity and multiplicity alike are built.

Material things, then, are analysable into modes of consciousness with an unknown cause to which these modes are due. But what is consciousness itself? Like matter, it has its subjective and its objective aspect. The subjective aspect consists of its various phenomenal conditions; the sensations which we ascribe to outward objects as their producing causes, and the emotions, passions, thoughts, and feelings which we conceive as of internal origin. The objective aspect consists of the unknown essence itself which experiences these various states; of the very self which is supposed to persist through all its changes of form; of the actual being which is the ultimate Reality of our mental lives. The existence of this ultimate Ego is known as an immediate fact of consciousness, and cannot be called in question without impugning the direct assurance which every one feels of his own being as apart from his particular and transient feelings. Nobody believes that he *is* the several sensations and emotions which he experiences in life; he believes that he *has* them. And if the existence of the Unknowable underlying material manifestations is perceived by a direct, indubitable inference, the existence of the Unknowable underlying mental manifestations is perceived without an inference at all by an

intuition from which there is no appeal. For no one can even attempt to reason with me about this conviction without resting his argument upon facts, and inferences from facts, which are in themselves less certain than this primary certainty which he is seeking to overthrow.

Existence, then, is known to us immediately in our own case; mediately in every other—consequently, the only conception we can frame of existence is derived from ourselves. Hence when we say that anything exists, we can only mean one of two things: either that it exists as a mode of human consciousness, as in the case of material things; or that it exists *per se*, and is the very substance of consciousness itself. And the former of these modes of existence is altogether dependent upon a conscious subject. A material object is a congeries of material qualities, none of which can be conceived at all except in relation to some percipient subject. Take away the subject, and colour, extension, solidity, sound, smell, and every other quality, vanish into nothing. The existence of these qualities, and hence the existence of matter itself in its phenomenal character, is relative and secondary. There remains therefore only the second of these two modes of existence as absolute and primary. The substance of consciousness, then, is the one reality which is known to exist; and in no other form is existence in its purity conceivable by us. For if we attempt to conceive a something as existent which is neither object nor subject, neither that which is felt nor that which feels, neither that which is thought nor that which thinks, we must inevitably fail. There is no *tertium quid* which is neither mind nor

matter of which we can frame the most remote conception. We may, if we please, imagine the existence of such a *tertium quid*, but the hypothesis is altogether fanciful, and would have nothing in science, nothing in the construction of the human mind, to render it even plausible. Indeed, it would be making an illegitimate use of the word "existence" to apply it in such a sense. Existence to us *means* consciousness, and never can mean anything else. We cannot by any effort conceive a universe previous to the origin of life in which there was no consciousness; for the moment we attempt to conceive it, we import our own consciousness into it. We think of ourselves as seeing or feeling it. The effort, therefore, to frame an idea of any existing thing without including consciousness in the idea is self-defeating, and when we predicate Existence of the Unknown Cause, we predicate its kinship to that ultimate substance of the mind from which alone our conception of absolute existence is derived.

Here, then, we have a second and more intimate relationship between the objective and the subjective elements in the religious emotion. They are found to be of kindred nature; or, to speak with stricter caution, it is found that we cannot think of them but as thus akin to one another. We must ever bear in mind, however, that our thoughts upon such a subject as this can be no more than partial approximations to the truth; tentative explorations in a dark region of the mind rather than accurate measurements of the ground. Thus, in the present instance, we have spoken of the Unknowable as more or less akin to the mind of man; yet we cannot think of the Unknowable as

resembling the fleeting states which are all that we know by direct observation of the constitution of the mind. It is not the passing and variable modes, but the fixed and unchangeable substratum on which those modes are conceived to be impressed, which the Unknowable must be held to resemble. And this substratum itself is an absolute mystery. We can in no way picture it to ourselves without its modes, which nevertheless we cannot regard as appertaining to its ultimate being. One further consideration will establish a yet closer relationship than that of likeness. The Unknown Reality, which is the source of all phenomena whatsoever, mental and physical, must of necessity *include* within itself that mode of existence which is manifested in consciousness; for otherwise, we must imagine yet another power as the originator of conscious life, and we should then have two unknown entities, still requiring a higher entity behind them both, to effect that entire harmony which actually subsists between them. The Unknowable is, therefore, the hidden source from which both the great streams of being, internal and external, take their rise. Since, then, our minds themselves originate in that Universal Source, since it comprehends every form of existence within itself, we stand to it in the relation of parts to a whole, in which and by which those parts subsist. There is thus not only likeness but identity of nature between ourselves and our unknown Origin. And it is literally true that *in* it "we live, and move, and have our being."

From the summit to which we have at length attained, we may survey the ground we have already

traversed, and comprehend, now that they lie below us, a few of the intricacies which we met with on our way. The apparent puzzle of automatism, for example, may be resolved into a more comprehensive law. It was shown, at the conclusion of the preceding chapter, that a train of physical events could in no way impinge upon, or pass over into, a train of mental events, nor a state of consciousness be converted into physical movements. But it was hinted that, while the distinction between the two great series of manifestations, those of mind and those of matter, was ultimate in the order of thought, it need not be ultimate in the order of things. Of this suggested possibility we have now found the confirmation; for we have seen that material phenomena, analysed to their lowest terms, resolve themselves into forms of consciousness, and forms of consciousness, analysed in their turn, prove to be the varied modes of an unknown subject; and this unknown subject has its roots in the ultimate Being in which both these great divisions of the phenomenal universe find their foundation and their origin. The distinction, therefore, between the mental and the material train belongs to these trains in their character of phenomena alone. They are distinguished in the human mind, not in the order of nature. Thus, if we recur to the illustration used in explaining automatism, we pointed out that in the circumstance of hearing a call and going to the window, two series might be thus distinguished: 1. The material series, consisting of atmospheric undulations, affections of the nerves and matter of the brain, movements of the body; 2. The mental series, consisting of the sensations of sitting still, and hearing

of the thought of a person, of the sensations of motion, and seeing the person. Now, if we take the trouble to observe the terms of which the first series is composed, we shall see that they also express states of consciousness, though states of a different kind from those contained in the terms of the second series. Undulations, nervous affections, movements, and so forth, are only intelligible by us as modifications of our consciousness. To conceive in any degree the atmospheric perturbations which are the physical correlatives of sound, we must imagine them as somehow felt or perceived—for instance, as a faint breeze. To conceive the cerebral changes implied in hearing, we must imagine ourselves as dissecting and examining the interior of the brain. In other words, the external train of events to which consciousness runs ever parallel can only be represented in thought by translating it into terms of consciousness; and the absolute harmony of both these trains, the fact that while states of consciousness do not originate the movements of our bodies, they yet bear so unvarying a relation to them as to be mistaken for their causes, finds its solution in the reflection that, when we look below the appearances to the reality pervading both, it is the same Universal Being which is manifested in each alike.

Hence, too, the sense of independent power to produce physical effects in accordance with mental conceptions, which forms the great obstacle to the general admission of the doctrine of human automatism. Reason as we may, we still feel that we are reservoirs of force which we give out in the shape of material movement whenever we please and as we

please. And if the doctrine of the Persistence of Force appears, by showing that every physical consequent has a purely physical antecedent, to contradict this feeling, we naturally give the preference to the feeling over the doctrine. But since the Persistence of Force is itself no less firmly seated in consciousness than the sense of independent power—since all nature would be a chaos without the Persistence of Force—it is the part of true philosophy to give its due to each. And this may be done by admitting the particle of truth contained in the belief that the human will influences the external world. We are indeed reservoirs of force. But it is not our own peculiar force that is exerted through us; it is the Universal Force, which is evinced no less in the actions of men than in the movements of inanimate nature. And since those actions are in constant unison with their wishes, there is not, and cannot be, the sense of constraint which is usually opposed to voluntary performance. Thus, to take a simple illustration, the necessities of our physical constitution absolutely compel us to support ourselves by food; yet no man feels that in eating his meals he is acting under external compulsion.

It would be a strange exception indeed to the universal prevalence of unvarying law, if human beings were permitted to exert independent influence upon the order of events. Not in so slovenly a manner has the work of nature been performed. We are no more free to disturb the harmony and beauty of the universe than are the stars in their courses or the planets in their orbits. Our courses and orbits are no less fixed than theirs, and it is but the imperfection of our knowledge,

if they have not been, and cannot yet be discovered. But it would be a lamentable blot upon a universe, where all things are fixed by a Power "in whom there is no variableness nor shadow of turning," were there permitted to exist a race of creatures who were a law unto themselves.

Again, the relation now established between the human mind and the ultimate Source both of mind and matter, serves to throw light upon that dark spot in the hypothesis of evolution—the origin of consciousness. For while in this hypothesis there is a continual progression, of which each step is the natural consequence of another, from the gaseous to the solid condition of our system, from inorganic to organic substances, from the humblest organisation to the most complex, there is absolutely no traceable gradation from the absence to the presence of conscious life. No cunning contrivances of science can derive sensation from non-sentient materials, for the difference between the two is not a difference in degree of development, but in kind. There is a radical unlikeness between the two, and it is unphilosophic, as well as unscientific, to disguise the fact that a mere process of material evolution can never lead from the one to the other. "The moment of a rising of consciousness," says Mr Shadworth Hodgson, "is the most important break in the world of phenomena or nature taken as a whole; the phenomena above and the phenomena below it can never be reduced completely into each other; there is a certain heterogeneity between them. But this is not the only instance of such a heterogeneity."[1] I venture to

[1] Hodgson's "Theory of Practice," vol. i. p. 340.

say that it is the only instance, and that there is nothing else in nature which can properly be compared with it. The instances of similar heterogeneity which Mr Hodgson gives appear to me less carefully considered than might have been expected from so careful a writer. That between Time and Space, which is his first case, is involved in that between mind and matter, and is only another expression of it (see *supra*, p. 447); while "curves and straight lines," and "physical and vital forces," are not truly heterogeneous at all, unless under "vital forces" we include mental effort, and so again illustrate the primary unlikeness by a case included under it. But the last example is remarkable. "Until Mr Darwin propounded his law of natural selection, it was supposed also [that there was heterogeneity] between species of living organisms in physiology." Now it is the great triumph of the evolutional system to have rid us of this unintelligible break, and to have shown that the whole of the material universe, inorganic and organic, is the result of the unchangeable operation of laws which are no less active now than they have ever been. In other words, evolution dispenses with the necessity of supposing the existence, at some point in the history of the planet, of a special law for the production of species brought into operation *ad hoc*.

But the general principles which apply to the origin of organic products must apply also to the origin of conscious life. This also must be figured as an evolution. This also must take place without the aid of a special law brought into operation *ad hoc*. Like the evolution of material products, it can only be con-

ceived as taking place from a pre-existing fund, containing potentially the whole of the effects which are afterwards found in actual existence.

Let us test this by trying to conceive the process in other ways. Consciousness might be supposed to arise in two ways: by special creation, and by uncaused origin, from nothing. Both possibilities are in absolute contradiction to the fundamental principles of evolution. Creation by a superior power is a hypothesis standing on a level with that of the creation of man out of the dust of the earth. To realise it in thought at all we must suppose the very thing intended to be denied, namely, the material of mind already existing in the universe, as that of body existed—in the earth. Otherwise, we should be obliged to admit the unthinkable hypothesis of the origin of something from nothing. This latter difficulty presses with its full force upon the second supposition. Mind would thereby be represented as suddenly springing into being without any imaginable antecedent. For no material antecedent can produce it without an exception to the Persistence of Force, which requires a material consequent. And it cannot arise without any antecedent but by a similar exception.

Neither creation nor destruction can in fact be represented as occurring in nature. We cannot conceive a new being arising out of nothing, or passing into nothing. As the development of the physical universe takes place by the change, composition, decomposition, and recomposition of pre-existing constituents, so it must be with the development of mind. We cannot suppose the origin of sensation, its advance

to more varied and complex kinds, through emotions, passions, and reasonings to the most subtle feelings and the profoundest thoughts, without believing that all of these have their source in the Ultimate Reality of nature, which comprehends not these only, but every further perfection of which we may yet be capable in ages to come.

Here, then, is the solution of the difficulty which was shown (p. 446) to beset the theory of abiogenesis; a theory which, if ultimately accepted by science, as I believe it will be, will for the first time bring perfect unity into our conceptions of the development of the world we live in. While science will thus show that there is no impassable break between inorganic and organic forms of matter, philosophy will confirm it by showing, that there is no real distinction between the universal life which is manifested in the (so-called) inanimate forces and constituents of our system and the fragmentary life which comes to light in animated creatures. There is heterogeneity nowhere. There are no breaks in nature. There are no unimaginable leaps in her unbroken course.

From the point of view now reached we can understand also—so far as understanding is possible in such a case—the apparent riddle of our knowledge of the existence of the Unknowable. We can explain the universal sentiment of religious minds that there is some direct relation between them and the object of their worship. The sense of an intuitional perception of that object, the sense of undefinable similarity thereto, the sense of inspiration and of guidance thereby, are included under and rendered intelligible by the actual identity in their ultimate natures of the

subject and the object of religious feeling. And the incomprehensibility of the latter is shown to have an obvious reason. For the part cannot comprehend the whole of which it is a part. It can but feel that there *is* a whole, in some mysterious way related to itself. But what that whole is, the conditions of its existence render it impossible that it should even guess.

Imagine the whole of the atmosphere divided into two great currents: a hot current continually ascending, and a cold current continually descending. And let the hot current represent the stream of conscious life, the cold current the stream of material things. To complete the simile, conceive that there is a sharp boundary between the two currents, so that atoms of air can never cross to and fro; while yet the conscious atoms in the hot current are aware of the existence of the unconscious atoms in the cold one. Now if the atoms or particles in the conscious current should be gifted with senses in proportion to their size, they will see and feel an infinitely minute portion both of the ascending current in which they themselves are placed, and of the descending current they are passing by. But of the whole of the atmosphere of which they are themselves fragmentary portions they will be able to form no conception whatever. Its existence they will be aware of, for it will be needed to explain their own. But of its nature they will have no idea, except that in some undefinable way it is like themselves. Nor will they be able to form any picture of the cause which is continually carrying them upwards, and forcing their homologues in the opposite current downwards. While, if we suppose these opposite movements to represent the

elements of Time and Space, they will be conscious of themselves only in terms of movement upwards, and of the unconscious particles in terms of movement downwards. They will suppose these two movements to be of the very essence of hot and cold particles, and will be able to conceive them only under these terms. Suppose, lastly, that at a certain point in their progress the hot particles become cold and pass into the opposing current, losing their individual, particular life, then their fellow-particles in the hot current will lose sight of them at that point, and they will be merged in the general stream of being to emerge again in their turn into the stream of conscious being.

Imperfect as this simile is, and as all such similes must be, it serves in some faint measure to express the relation of the mind of man to its mysterious Source. And it serves also to illustrate the leading characteristics of Religion and Theology, or Faith and Belief, the function of the first having ever been to conceive the existence of that relation, and the function of the second to misconceive its character. Thus there runs through the whole course of religious history a pervading error and a general truth. In all its special manifestations these two have been mingled confusedly together, and the manifold forms of error have generally obscured from sight the single form of truth.

The relation held by Faith to Belief, by the true elements to the false, in special creeds, may be thus expressed: That the creeds have sought to individualise, and thus to limit that which is essentially general and unlimited. Thus worship, in its purest

character a mere communing of the mind with its unknown Source, has been narrowed to the presentation of petitions to a personal deity. Particular places and peculiar objects have been selected as evincing, in some exceptional manner, the presence of the infinite Being which pervades all places and things alike. Certain men have been regarded as the exclusive organs of the ultimate Truth; certain books, as its authorised expressions; whereas the several races of men in their different modes of life, and in the diverse products of their art and their culture, are all in their variety, and even in their conflict, inspired workers in the hands of that Truth which is manifested completely in none, partially in all.

And as it has been with the special objects upon which Theology has fixed its gaze, so it has been with the general object which underlies them all. This, too, has been individualised, limited, and defined. It has been forgotten that we are but forms of that which we are seeking to bring within the grasp of our reason, and cannot therefore see around it, above it, and below it. But this truth, which Theology is ever forgetting, Religion must ever proclaim. The proclamation of this truth is the title-deed of its acceptance by mankind. Without this, it would sink into the dishonoured subject of incessant wranglings and profitless dispute. When it begins to define the Infinite, it ceases, in the purer sense of the word, to be Religion; and can only command the assent of reasonable beings in so far as its assertions comply with the rigorous methods of logical demonstration. But this condition is in fact impossible of fulfilment, for the nature of the object concerning which we

reason, renders the exact terms of logical propositions misleading and inadequate. The Unknowable Reality does not admit of definition, comprehension, or description. How should we, mere fragments of that Reality, define, comprehend, or describe the Infinite Being wherein we have taken our rise, and whereto we must return?

Thus is Religion analysed, explained, and justified. Its varied forms have been shown to be unessential and temporary; its uniform substance to be essential and permanent. Belief has melted away under the comparative method; Faith has remained behind. From two sides, however, objections may be raised to the results of this analysis. Those who admit no ultimate residuum of truth in the religious sentiment at all, may hold that I have done it too much honour in conceding so much; while those who adhere to some more positive theology than is admitted here, will think that I have left scarcely anything worth the having in conceding so little.

To the first class of objectors I may perhaps be permitted to point out the extreme improbability of the presence in human nature of a universally-felt emotion without a corresponding object. Even if they themselves do not realise in their own minds the force of that emotion they will at least not deny its historical manifestations. They will scarcely question that it has been in all ages known to history as an inspiring force, and often an overmastering passion. They will believe the evidence of those who affirm that they are conscious of that emotion now, and cannot attribute it to anything but the

kind of Cause which religion postulates. The actual presence of the emotion they will not deny, though the explanation attempted of its origin they will. But those who make the rather startling assertion that a deep-seated and widespread emotion is absolutely without any object resembling that which it imagines to be its source, are bound to give some tenable account of the genesis of that emotion. How did it come into being at all? How having come into being, did it continue and extend? How did it come to mistake a subjective illusion for an objective reality?

These are questions pressing for an answer from those who ask us to believe that one of our strongest feelings exists merely to deceive. But it will be found, I believe, that all explanations tending to show that this emotion is illusory in its nature assume the very unreality they seek to prove. Should it, for example, be contended that human beings, conscious of a force in their own bodies, extend the conception of this force to a superhuman being, which extension is illegitimate, it is assumed, not proved, in such an argument as this, that the force manifested in the universe at large is not in some way akin to that manifested in human beings. Again, should it be urged that man, being aware of design in his own works, fancies a like design in the works of nature, it is a mere assumption that this attribution of the ideas of his own mind to a mind greater than his is an unwarrantable process. The argument from design may be, and in my opinion is, open to other grave objections; but its mere presence cannot be used as explaining the manner in which the religious emotion

has come to exist. Rather is it the religious emotion which has found expression in the argument from design. The same criticism applies to all accounts of this sentiment which aim at finding an origin for it sufficient to explain its presence without admitting its truth. They all of them assume the very point at issue.

But the real difficulty that is felt about religion lies deeper than in the mere belief that a given emotion may be deceptive. It lies in the doubt whether a mere emotion can be taken in evidence of the presence in nature of any object at all. Emotions are by their very nature vague, and this is of all perhaps the vaguest. Nor are emotions vague only; they are inexpressible in precise language, and even when we express them as clearly as we can, they remain unintelligible to those who have not felt them. Now this general and unspecific character of emotions renders it hard for those who are wanting in any given emotion to understand its intensity in others, and even fully to believe in their statements about it. Were religion a case of sensible perception they would have no such doubt. Colour-blind persons do not question the faculty of distinguishing colours in others. But while the sharp definitions of the senses compel us to believe in the existence of their objects, the comparatively hazy outlines drawn by the emotions leave us at least a physical possibility of disputing the existence of theirs.

Yet the cases are in their natures identical. We see a table, and because we see it we infer the existence of a real thing external to ourselves. The presence of the sensations is conceived to be an adequate

warrant for asserting the presence of their cause. Precisely in the same way, we feel the Unknowable Being, and because we feel it we infer the existence of a real object both external to ourselves and within ourselves. The presence of the emotion is conceived to be an adequate warrant for asserting the presence of its cause. Undoubtedly, the supposed object of the sensations and the supposed object of the emotion *might* be both of them illusory. This is conceivable in logic, though not in fact. But there can be no reason for maintaining the unreality of the emotional, and the reality of the sensible object. Existence is believed in both instances on the strength of an immediate, intuitional inference. The mental processes are exactly parallel. And if it be contended that sensible perception carries with it a stronger warrant for our belief in the existence of its objects than internal feeling, the reasons for this contention must be exhibited before we can be asked to accept it; otherwise, it will again turn out to be a pure assumption, constituting, not a reason for the rejection of religion by those who now accept it, but a mere explanation of the conduct of those who do not.

In fact, however, the denial of the truth of religion is no less emotional then its affirmation. It is not denied because those who disbelieve in it have anything to produce against it, but because the inner sense which results in religion is either absent in them, or too faint to produce its usual consequences. For this of course they are not to blame, and nothing can be more irrational than to charge them with moral delinquency or culpable blindness. If the Unknown

Cause is not perceptible to them, that surely is not a deficiency to be laid to their charge. But when they quit the emotional stronghold wherein they are safe to speak of those to whom that Unknown Cause is perceptible as the victims of delusion, these latter may confidently meet them on the field which they themselves have chosen.

First, then, it is at least a rather startling supposition that their fellow-creatures have always been, and are still, the victims of a universal delusion, from which they alone enjoy the privilege of exemption. Presumption, at all events, is against a man who asserts that everybody but himself sees wrongly. He may be the only person whose eyes have not deceived him, but we should require him to give the strongest proof of so extraordinary an assertion. And in all cases which are in the least degree similar, this condition is complied with without the smallest hesitation. There are, so far as I am aware, no instances of proved universal delusions, save those arising from the misleading suggestions of the senses. That the earth is a flat surface, that the sun moves round it, that the sun and moon are larger than the stars, that the blue sky begins at a fixed place, are inferences which the uninstructed observer cannot fail to draw from the most obvious appearances. But those who have combated these errors have not done so by merely telling the world at large that it was mistaken; they have pointed out the phenomena from which the erroneous inferences were drawn, and have shown at the same time that other phenomena, no less evident to the senses than these, were inconsistent with the explanation given. They have then substituted an explana-

tion which accounted for all the phenomena alike, both the more obvious phenomena and the less so. Precisely similar is the method of procedure in history and philosophy, though the methods of 'proof' in these sciences are not equally rigorous. Great historical delusions—such as the Popish plot—are put to rest by showing the misinterpreted facts out of which they have grown, exposing the misinterpretation, and substituting true interpretation. Imperfect psychological analysis, say of an emotion, is superseded by showing from what facts this analysis has been obtained, and what other facts it fails to account for.

Observe, then, that in all these cases the appeal is made from the first impressions of the mistaken person to his own impressions on further examination; not to those of another. Considerations are laid before him which it is supposed will cause him to change his mind, and in all that class of cases where strict demonstration is possible actually do so. To a man who believes the earth to be a flat extended surface we point out the fact that the top of a ship's mast is the first part of it to appear, and that this and other kindred phenomena imply sphericity. Our appeal is from the senses to the senses better informed; not from another man's senses to our own. And we justly assume that were all the world in possession of the facts we have before us, all the world would be of our opinion.

What, then, is the conclusion from these analogies? It surely is, that those who would deny the reality of the object of religious emotion must show from what appearances, misunderstood, the belief in that object

has arisen, and must point out other appearances leading to other emotions which are in conflict with it. As the astronomer appeals from sensible perception to sensible perception, so they must appeal from emotion to emotion. But it must not be their own emotions to which they go as forming a standard for ours. They can demand no hearing at all until they attempt to influence the emotions of those whom they address.

Generality of belief need not, for the purposes of this argument, be taken as even a presumption of truth. We can grant our adversaries this advantage which, in the parallel cases of the illusions of the senses, was neither asked nor given. But we must ask them in return to concede to us that, if the generality of a belief entitles it to no weight in philosophic estimation, the singularity of a belief entitles it to none either. All mankind may be deluded: well and good: *a fortiori* a few individuals among mankind may be deluded too. Grant that the human faculties at large are subject to error and deception, it follows from this that the faculties of individuals lie under the same disability. No word can be said as to the general liability to false beliefs, which does not carry with it the liability to false beliefs of the very persons who are seeking to convince us.

By whom, in fact, are we asked to admit, in the interests of their peculiar theory, the prevalence of a universal deception, and a deception embracing in its grasp not only the ignorant multitude, but men of science, thinkers and philosophers of the very highest altitude of culture? By whom is it that the great mass of humankind is charged with baseless thoughts,

illusory emotions, and untenable ideas? By those who, in thus denying the capacity of the whole human race to perceive the truth, nevertheless maintain their own capacity to see over the heads of their fellow-men so far as to assert that they are all the victims of an error. By those who, while bidding us distrust the strongest feelings, nevertheless require us to trust them so far as to banish, at their bidding, those feelings from our hearts. Not from our reason to our more instructed reason do they appeal, only from our reason to their own. But I deny the competence of the tribunal; and I maintain that until not merely disbelief, but disproof, of the position of Religion can be offered, Religion must remain in possession of the field.

Yet there is one mistake which, as it may tend to obscure the issue, it will be desirable to clear away. It is often contended, oftener perhaps tacitly assumed, that the burden of proof must rest on those who in any case maintain the affirmative side of a belief, while the negative on its side requires no proof, but can simply claim reception until the affirmative is established. Now this principle is true, where the negative is simply a suspension of judgment; the mere non-acceptance of a fact asserted, without a counter-assertion of its opposite. To understand the true application of the rule we must distinguish between what I will term substantial affirmations or negations, and affirmations or negations in form. Thus, to assert that A. B. is six feet tall, is a substantial affirmation. Out of many possible alternatives it selects one, and postulates that one as true, while all the rest it discards as false. Since, however, there are numerous

possibilities besides this one with regard to A. B.'s height—since he may be either taller or shorter by various degrees—the negative, in the absence of all knowledge on the subject, is inherently more probable, for it covers a larger ground. It is a substantial negation. That is, it affirms nothing at all, but simply questions the fact affirmed, leaving the field open to countless other substantial affirmations. So, in law, it is the prosecution which is required to prove its case; for the prosecution affirms that this man was at a given place at a given time and did the criminal action. The opposite hypothesis of this covers innumerable alternatives: not this man, but another, may have been at that place; or he may have been there and not done the action charged, or some other man may have done it, or the crime may not have been committed at all, and so forth. These are cases of substantial affirmations; asserting one alone out of many conceivable possibilities, and therefore needing proof. And their opposites are substantial negations; questioning only the one fact affirmed, and even with reference to that merely maintaining that in the absence of proof there is an inherent probability in favour of the negative side.

Widely different is the case before us. Here the affirmation and the negation are affirmative and negative in form alone. The assertions, "An Unknowable Being exists," and "An Unknowable Being does not exist," are not opposed to one another as the affirmative and the negative sides were opposed in the previous cases. The latter proposition does not cover a number of possible alternatives whereof the former selects and affirms a single one. Both propositions are

true and substantial affirmations. Both assert a supposed actual fact. And the latter does not, as the previous negative propositions did, leave the judgment in simple suspense. It requires assent to a given doctrine. That the one is cast in a negative form is the mere accident of expression, and without in any way affecting their substance, their positions in this respect may be reversed. Thus, we may say for the first, "The universe cannot exist without an Unknowable Being;" and for the second, "The universe can exist without an Unknowable Being." There are not here a multitude of alternatives, but two only, and of these each side affirms one. Each proposition is equally the assertion of a positive belief. Thus, the reason which, in general, causes the greater antecedent probability of a denial as against a positive assertion, in no way applies to the denial of the fundamental postulate of Religion. The statement that there is nobody in a certain room is not in itself more probable than the statement that there is somebody. And the proposition: "all men are not mortal," though negative in form, is truly as affirmative as the counter-proposition: "all men are mortal."

But this argument, inasmuch as it places the denial of all truth in the religious emotion on a level with its affirmation, fails to do justice to the real strength of the case. There are not here two contending beliefs, of which the one is as probable as the other. In conceding so much to the sceptical party we have given them a far greater advantage than they are entitled to demand. Generality of belief is, in the absence of evidence or argument to the contrary, a presumption of truth; for, unless its origin from

some kind of fallacy can be shown, its generality is in itself a proof that it persists in virtue of the general laws of mind which forbid the separation of its subject from its predicate. And it is not only that we have here a general belief, or, more correctly speaking, a general emotion, but we have categories in the human mind which are not filled up or capable of being filled up but by the objective element in the religious idea. There is, for example, the category of Cause. Nature presents us not with Cause, but with causes; and these causes are mere antecedents, physical causation in general being nothing whatever but invariable antecedence and invariable sequence. But this analysis of the facts of nature by no means satisfies the conception of causation which is rooted in the human mind. That conception imperiously demands a cause which is not a mere antecedent, but a Power. Without that, the idea would remain as a blank form, having no reality to fill it. And how do we come to be in the firm possession of this idea if there be nothing in nature corresponding to it? From what phenomena could it be derived? Akin to our notion of Cause is our notion of Force. When the scientific man speaks of a Force, he merely means an unknown something which effects certain movements. And Science cannot possibly dispense with the metaphysical idea of Force. Yet Force is not only unknowable; but it is *the* Unknowable manifested in certain modes. Again, therefore, I ask, whence do we derive the ineradicable feeling of the manifestation of Force, if that feeling be a mere illusion? Similar remarks apply to other categories which, like these, have no objects in actual existence

if the conformity of the religious sentiment to truth be denied. Such is the category of Reality. Imagination cannot picture the world save as containing, though in its essence unknown to us, some real and permanent being. We know it only as a compound of phenomena, all of them fleeting, variable, and unsubstantial. There is nothing in the phenomena which can satisfy our mental demand for absolute being. As being transient, and as being relative, the phenomena in fact are nothing. But our intellectual, our emotional, and our moral natures demand the τὸ ὄντως ὄν—that which really is, as the necessary completion of τὰ φαινόμενα—that which only appears. And it is precisely the unshakeable belief in an unchangeable, though unknowable Reality; an everlasting Truth amid shifting forms, a Substance among shadows, which forms the universal foundation of religious faith.

A ship that has been driven from her intended course is drifting, with a crew who have no clear knowledge of her whereabouts, upon an unexplored ocean. Suddenly her captain exclaims that he sees land in the distance. The mate, however, summoned to verify the captain's observation, fancies that the black speck on the horizon is not land, but a large vessel. The sailors and passengers take part; some with the one, some with the other; while many of them form opinions of their own not agreeing with that of either, one maintaining it to be a whale, another a dark cloud, a third something else, and so forth. Minor differences abound. Those who take it to be land are at issue as to its being a plain or a mountain, those who think it a vessel cannot agree as

to the description of the craft. One solitary passenger sees nothing at all. Instead of drawing what would appear to be the most obvious conclusion, that he is either more shortsighted or less apt to discover distant objects than the rest, he infers that his vision alone is right, and that of all the others, captain, passengers, and crew, defective and misleading. Oblivious of the fact that the mere failure to perceive an object is no proof of its non-existence, he persists in asserting not only that the speck seen in the distance, being so variously described, probably does not resemble any of the ideas formed of it on board the ship, but that there is no speck at all. Even the fact that the crews of many other ships, passing in this direction, perceive the same dim outline on the horizon, does not shake his conviction that it is a mere "idol of the tribe." Such is the procedure of those who deny the reality of the object of the religious idea. Instead of drawing from the diversity of creeds the legitimate inference that the Being of whom they severally speak is of unknown nature, they conclude, from the mere absence of the idea of that Being in their individual consciousness, that its very existence is a dream.

Lastly, a few words, and a few only, must be said in reply to those who will think that the conception of the Unknowable resulting from our analysis is too vague and shadowy to form the fitting foundation for religious feeling. They will probably object that the Being whom that feeling requires is not an inconceivable Cause or Substance of the Universe, but a Personal God; not an undefined something which we can barely imagine, but a definite Some one whom

we can adore and love. There is nothing, they will say, in such a conception as this either to satisfy the affections or to impress the moral sentiments. And both purposes were fulfilled by the Christian ideal of a loving Father and a righteous Judge.

To these objections I would reply, first of all, that I have simply attempted to analyse religion as I found it, neither omitting what was of the essence of the religious idea, nor inserting what was not. If this analysis is in any respect defective, that is a matter for criticism and discussion. But if it has been correctly performed—of which I frankly admit there is abundant room for doubt—then I am not responsible for not finding in the universal elements of religion that which is not contained within them. The expression found for the ultimate truths must embrace within it, if possible, the crude notions of deity formed by the savage, and the highly abstract ideal formed by the most eminent thinkers of modern times. Even then, if I myself held the doctrines of the personality and the fatherhood of God, I could not have required from others any admission of these views of mine as universal ingredients in religious faith. The utmost I could have done would have been to tack them on as supplementary developments of the idea of the ultimate Being. And this it is still open to any one who wishes it to do. Difficult as it is to reconcile the ideas of Love and Justice with unlimited Power and absolute Existence, yet if there are some who find it possible to accomplish the reconciliation, it may be well for them so to do.[1]

[1] See an ingenious attempt to maintain the personality, along with the moral qualities of God, in Mr Shadworth Hodgson's "Theory of Practice," vol. i. p. 305 ff.

Undoubtedly, however, all such efforts do appear to me mere hankerings after an incarnation of that idea which, by its very nature, does not admit of representation by incarnate forms, even though those forms be moral perfections. And I would reply, secondly, to the above objection, that, while we lose something by giving up the definite personality of God, we gain something also. If we part with the image of a loving Father, we part also with that of a stern monarch and an implacable judge. If we can no longer indulge in the contemplation of perfect virtue, embodied in an actual Person, we are free from the problem that has perplexed theologians of every age: how to reconcile the undoubted evil in the world with the omnipotence of that Person. I know that there are some who think it possible to retain the gentler features in the popular conception of deity, while dropping all that is harsh and repulsive. To them the idea of God is as free from terror as the idea of the Unknowable, and the first of these gains is therefore no gain to them. But the problem of the existence of evil presses perhaps with greater severity upon them than upon any other class of theologians. To suppose that God could not prevent the presence of wickedness, or could not prevent it without some greater calamity, is to deny his omnipotence; to suppose that he could, and did not, is to question his benevolence. But even admitting the improvement made by purging from the character of God all its severity, its vindictiveness, and its tendency to excessive punishment, the fact remains that the conception thus attained is not that of the popular creed at all, but that of a few enlightened thinkers. And it is with the former, not with the latter, that the

doctrine of the Unknowable must be compared, in order fairly to estimate its advantages or disadvantages in relation to the current belief in a personal God.

Moreover, it must be borne in mind that the dim figure we have shadowed out of an inconceivable and all-embracing ultimate Existence, if widely different from the more ordinary theological embodiments of the religious idea, is altogether in harmony with many of its expressions by the most devoutly religious minds. If religion has always had a tendency to run to seed in dogma, it has also always had a tendency to revert to its fundamental mysticism. The very best and highest minds have continually evinced this tendency to mysticism, and it has mixed itself up with the logical definitions of others who did not rise to so exalted a level. So that the examination of the writings of religious men will continually disclose that profound impression of the utterly incomprehensible and mysterious nature of the Supreme Being which is now, in its complete development in the form of Agnosticism, stigmatised as incompatible with genuine religious faith.

That tendency to be deeply sensible of the impossibility of conceiving the Absolute which Religion has thus evinced, it is the result of Science to strengthen and to increase. Science shows the imperfection of all the concrete expressions which have been found for the Unknowable. It proves that we cannot think of the Unknowable as entering in any peculiar sense into special objects in nature, dwelling in special places, or speaking through special channels. Miraculous phenomena, which were supposed to constitute the peculiar sphere of its manifestations, are thrown

by Science completely out of the account. But all phenomena whatsoever are shown to manifest the Unknowable. Thus, while scientific inquiry tends to diminish the intensity of religious ideas, it tends to widen their extension. They do not any longer cling to partial symbols. They do not attach themselves with the same fervour to individual embodiments. But, in becoming more abstract, they become also more pervading. Religion is found everywhere and in everything. All nature is the utterance of the idea. And, as it gains in extension while losing in intensity in reference to the external world, it goes through a similar process in relation to human life. No longer a force seizing on given moments of our existence, at one moment inspiring devotional observances, at the next forgotten in the pleasures or the business of the day; at one time filling men with the zeal of martyrs or crusaders, at another leaving them to the unrestrained indulgence of gross injustice or revolting cruelty, it becomes a calm, all-pervading sentiment, shown (if it be shown at all) in the general beauty and spirituality of the character, not in the stated exercises of a rigorous piety, or in the passionate outbursts of an enthusiastic fervour.

But these considerations would lead me on to a subject which I had once hoped to treat within the boundaries of the present volume, but which I am now compelled, owing to the enlargement of the scheme, to postpone to a future time. That subject is the relation of religion to ethics. It may have struck some readers as an omission that I have said nothing of religion as a force inspiring moral conduct, which is the principal aspect under which it is regarded by

some competent authorities. But the omission has been altogether intentional. It would take me a long time to explain what in my judgment has been the actual influence of religion upon morals in the past, and what is likely to be its influence in the future. Meanwhile I merely note the fact that this analysis professes to be complete in its own kind; that I have endeavoured to probe the religious sentiment to the bottom, and to discover all that it contains. Thus, if religion be not only an emotion, but a moral force, it must acquire this character in virtue of the relation of its emotional elements to human character, not in virtue of the presence of ethical elements actually belonging to the religious emotion, and comprehended under it by the same indefeasible title as the sense of the Unknowable itself.

At present, however, I can attempt no answer to the objection which will no doubt be urged, that so abstract and cold a faith as that expounded here can afford no satisfaction to the moral sentiments. Indeed I must to a certain extent admit the reality of the loss which the adoption of this faith entails. There is consolation no doubt in the thought of a Heavenly Father who loves us; there is strength in the idea that he sees and helps us in our continual combat against evil without and evil within; there is happiness in the hope that he will assign us in another life an infinite reward for all the endurances of this. Above all, there is comfort in the reflection that when we are parted by death we are not parted for ever; that our love for those whom we have cherished on earth is no temporary bond, to be broken ere long in bitterness and despair, but a possession never to be lost again,

a union of souls interrupted for a little while by the separation of the body, only to be again renewed in far greater perfection and carried on into far higher joys than can be even imagined here. All this is beautiful and full of fascination: why should we deny it? Candour compels us to admit that in giving it up with the other illusions of our younger days we are resigning a balm for the wounded spirit for which it would be hard to find an equivalent in all the repertories of Science, and in all the treasures of philosophy. Yet it must be borne in mind that every step from a lower to a higher creed involves a precisely similar loss. How much more beautiful was nature (as Schiller has shown us in his poem on the gods of Greece) when every fountain, tree and river had its presiding genius, when the Sun was driven by a divine charioteer, when the deities of Olympus intervened in the affairs of men to prevent injustice and to maintain the right. How cold and lifeless, nay, how profoundly irreligious, would our modern conception of the earth and the solar system have appeared to the worshipper of Poseidon and Apollon. And if the loss of the Christian as compared to the Pagan is thus great, how great also is the loss of the enlightened Protestant as compared to the ignorant Catholic peasant. What comfort must be found in the immediate intervention of the Virgin in answer to prayer, what security afforded by the protection of the local saint. Or again, how great the pleasure of contributing by our piety to the release of a friend from purgatorial torment, and of knowing that our friends in their turn will do us the same kindly service.

Even without contrasting such broad and conspi-

cuous divisions of Christianity as these, we shall find enough of the same kind of difference within the limits of Protestantism itself. What mere intellectual conviction of a future state can vie with the consoling certainty offered by the Spiritualistic belief, that those whom we have lost on earth still hover around us in our daily course; sometimes even appear to us in bodily form, and converse with us in human speech. No mere hope of meeting them again can for a moment equal the delight of seeing their well-known shapes and hearing their familiar tones. Hence the Spiritualist has undoubtedly a source of comfort in his faith which more rational creeds can offer nothing to supply. But who that does not share it can envy them so baseless a conviction, so illusory a joy?

It is, in fact, the very condition of progress that, as we advance in knowledge and in culture, we give up something on the road. But it is also a condition that we do not feel the need of that which we have lost. Not only as we become men do we put away childish things, but we can no longer realise in thought the enjoyment which those childish things brought with them. Other interests, new occupations, deeper affections take the place of the interests, the occupations, and the affections of our early years. So too should it be in religion. Men have dwelt upon the love of God because they could not satisfy the craving of nature for the love of their fellow-men. They have looked forward to eternal happiness in a future life because they could not find temporary happiness in this. It is these reflections which point out the way in which the void left by the removal of the religious affections should hereafter be supplied. The effort of

those who cannot turn for consolation to a friend in heaven should be to strengthen the bonds of friendship on earth, to widen the range of human sympathy and to increase its depth. We should seek that love in one another which we have hitherto been required to seek in God. Above all, we should sweep away those barriers of convention and fancied propriety which continually hinder the free expression of affection, and force us to turn from the restrictions of the world to One towards whom there need be no irksome conformity to artificial regulation, and in speaking to whom we are under no shadow of reserve.

Were we thus permitted to find in our fellow-creatures that sympathy which so many mourners, so many sufferers, so many lonely hearts, have been compelled to find only in the idea of their heavenly Father, I hesitate not to say that the consolations of the new religion would far surpass in their strength and their perfection all those that were offered by the old. Towards such increasing and such deepening of the sympathies of humanity I believe that we are continually tending even now. Meantime, while we are still far from the promised land, the adherents of the universal religion are not without a happiness of their own. Their faith is at least a faith of perfect peace. Untroubled by the storms of controversy, in which so many others are tossed about, they can welcome all men as brothers in faith, for all of them, even the most hostile, contribute to supply the stones of the broad foundation upon which their philosophy is built. Those therefore who contend against them, be it even with vehemence and passion, yield them involuntary help in bringing the

materials upon which their judgment is formed. No man can truly oppose their religion, for he who seems to be hostile to it is himself but one of the notes struck by the Unknowable Cause, which so plays upon the vast instrument of humanity as to bring harmony out of jangling sounds, and to produce the universal chords of truth from the individual discords of error. Scientific discoveries and philosophic inquiries, so fatal to other creeds, touch not the universal religion. They who accept it can but desire the increase of knowledge, for even though new facts and deeper reasoning should overthrow something of what they have hitherto believed and taught, they will rejoice that their mistakes should be corrected, and their imperfections brought to light. They desire but the Truth, and the Truth has made them free. And as in their thoughts they can wish nothing so much as to know and to believe that which is true, so in their lives they will express the serenity which that desire will inevitably bring. They are not pained or troubled because other men see not as they see. They have no vain hope of a unity of thought which the very conditions of our being do not permit. They aim not at conquering the minds of men; far rather would they stimulate and help them to discover a higher Truth than they themselves have been permitted to know. And as their action will thus be inspired with the hope of contributing their mite to the treasury of human knowledge, well-being, and moral good, so their death will be the expression of that peaceful faith which has sustained their lives. Even though torn away when, in their own judgment, they have still much to do, they will

not repine at the necessity of leaving it undone, even though they are well aware that their names, which might have been illustrious in the annals of our race, will now be buried in oblivion. For the disappearance of a single life is but a ripple on the ocean of humanity, and humanity feels it not. Hence they will meet their end "sustained and soothed by an unfaltering trust,"

> "Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch
> About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams."

But the opposite fate, sometimes still more terrible, that of continuing to live when the joys of life are gone, and its purest happiness is turned into the bitterest pain, will be accepted too. Thus they will be willing, if need be, to remain in a world where their labour is not yet ended, even though that labour be wrought through suffering, despondency, and sorrow; willing also, if need be, to meet the universal lot,—even though it strike them in the midst of prosperity, happiness, and hope; bowing in either case to the verdict of fate with unmurmuring resignation and fearless calm.

THE END.

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